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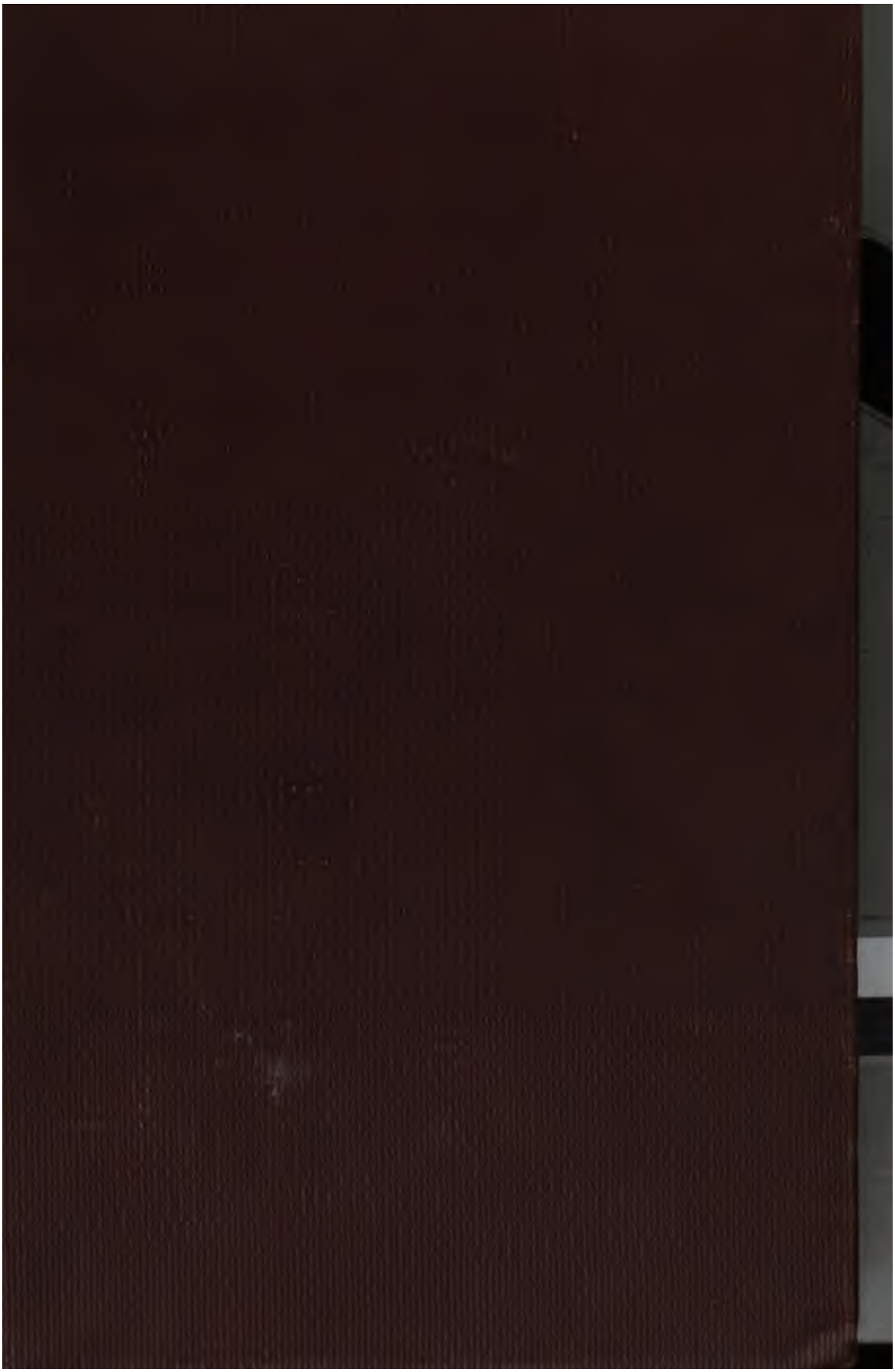

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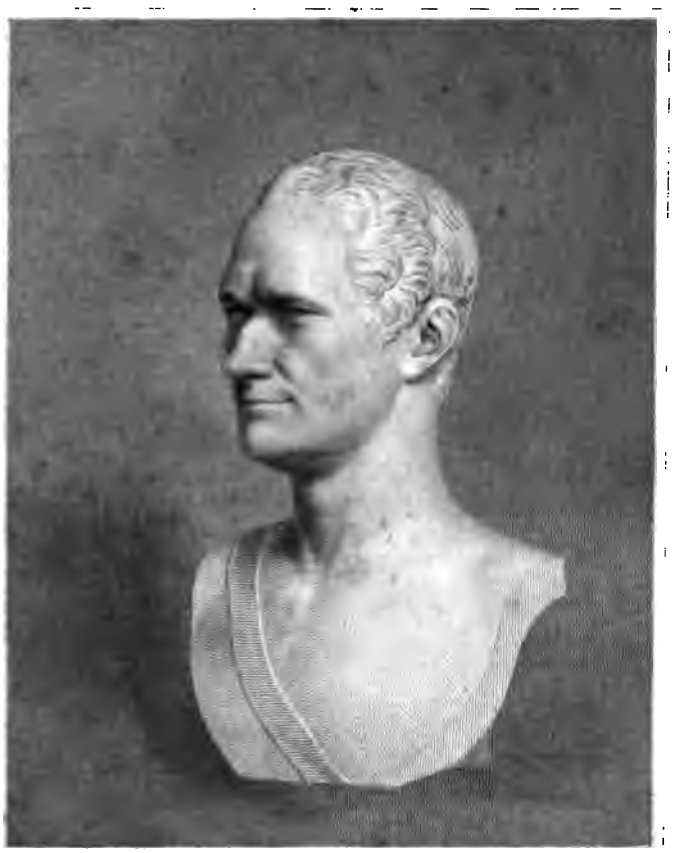
VOL. I.



NEW-YORK:
JOHN F. TROW, PRINTER, 49, 51 & 53 ANN-STREET.
M.DCCC.L.

THE WORKS

OF

ALEXANDER HAMILTON;

COMPRISING

HIS CORRESPONDENCE,

AND

HIS POLITICAL AND OFFICIAL WRITINGS,

EXCLUSIVE OF THE FEDERALIST,

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EDITED BY

JOHN C. HAMILTON,

AUTHOR OF "THE LIFE OF HAMILTON."

VOL. I.

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CORRESPONDENCE.

HAMILTON TO EDWARD STEVENS.

St. Croix, Nov. 11, 1769.

This serves to acknowledge the receipt of yours per Capt. Lowndes, which was delivered me yesterday. The truth of Captains Lightbowen and Lowndes' information is now verified by the presence of your father and sister, for whose safe arrival I pray, and that they may convey that satisfaction to your soul that must naturally flow from the sight of absent friends in health; and shall, for news this way, refer you to them. As to what you say respecting your soon having the happiness of seeing us all, I wish for an accomplishment of your hopes, provided they are concomitant with your welfare, otherwise not; though I doubt whether I shall be present or not, for, to confess my weakness, Ned, my ambition is prevalent, so that I contemn the grovelling condition of a clerk or the like, to which my fortune condemns me, and would willingly risk my life, though not my character, to exalt my station. I am confident, Ned, that my youth excludes me from any hopes of immediate preferment, nor do I desire it; but I mean to prepare the way for futurity. I'm no philosopher, you see, and may justly be said to build castles in the air; my folly makes

HAMILTON'S WORKS.

VOL. I.

year with another, to——. Mr. Kerseboom, agreeing with Dr. Halley, makes the number of people thirty-five times the number of births in a year.

Extracts from Demosthenes' Orations.

Philippic 1. "As a general marches at the head of his troops, so ought wise politicians, if I dare use the expression, to march at the head of affairs; insomuch that they ought not to wait *the event*, to know what measures to take; but the measures which they have taken ought to produce the *event*."

"Where attack him? it will be said. Ah, Athenians—war, war itself will discover to you his weak sides, if you seek them."

Sublimely simple. Vide Long. c. 16.

Are the limits of the several States and the acts on which they are founded ascertained, and are our ministers provided with them? What intelligence has been given to Congress by our ministers of the designs, strength by sea and land, actual interests and views of the different powers in Europe?

The Government established (by Lycurgus) remained in vigor about five hundred years, till a thirst of empire tempted the Spartans to entertain foreign troops, and introduce Persian gold to maintain them; then the institutions of Lycurgus fell at once, and avarice and luxury succeeded.

He (Numa) was a wise prince, and went a great way in civilizing the Romans. The chief engine he employed for this purpose was religion, which could alone have sufficient empire over the minds of a barbarous and warlike people to engage them to cultivate the arts of peace.

Doctor Halley's Table of Observations exhibiting the probabilities of life; containing an account of the whole number of people at Breslau, capital of Silesia, and the number of those of every age from one to a hundred. [Here follows the Table, with comments by A. H.

When the native money is worth more than the par in foreign, exchange is high; when worth less it is low.

Portugal trade—Spanish trade—Artificers—Money—Exchange—Par of exchange—Balance of trade—Manufactures—Foundry—Coin—Gold—Silver—Naval power—Council of trade—Fishery.

Money coined in England from the reign of Queen Elizabeth.

Short rule to determine the average interest per annum, for any sum of money for a given term of years, at a given rate—discharging annually an equal proportion of the principal. Example.

Quere. Would it not be advisable to let all taxes, even those imposed by the States, be collected by persons of Congressional appointment; and would it not be advisable to pay the collectors so much per cent. on the sums collected?

HAMILTON TO THE PROVINCIAL CONGRESS OF NEW-YORK.

NEW-YORK, May 26, 1776.

GENTLEMEN:

I take the liberty to request your attention to a few particulars, which will be of considerable importance to the future progress of the company under my command: and I shall be much obliged to you for as speedy a determination concerning them as you can conveniently give. The most material is respecting the pay. Our company, by their articles, are to be subject to the same regulations, and to receive the same pay, as the Continental Artillery. Hitherto I have conformed to the standard laid down in the Journal of the Congress, published the 10th May, 1775; but I am well informed that, by some later regulation, the pay of the Artillery has been augmented, and

now stands according to the following rates: Captain, £10. 13. 4. Captain-Lieutenant, £8. Lieutenants, each, £7. 6. 8. Sergeants, £3. 6. 8. Corporals, £3. 1. 4. Bombardiers, £3. 1. 4. Gunners, £3. Matrosses, £2. 17. 4. Drummers and Fifers, £3. By comparing these with my pay-rolls, you will discover a considerable difference; and I doubt not you will be easily sensible that such a difference should not exist.

I am not personally interested in having an augmentation agreeably to the above rates, because my own pay will remain the same as that it now is: but I make this application on behalf of the company; as I am fully convinced such a disadvantageous distinction will have a very pernicious effect on the minds and behavior of the men. They do the same duty with the other companies, and think themselves entitled to the same pay. They have been already comparing accounts; and many marks of discontent have lately appeared on this score. As to the circumstance of our being confined to the defence of the colony, it will have little or no weight; for there are but few in the company, who would not as willingly leave the colony on any necessary expedition, as stay in it: and they will not, therefore, think it reasonable to have their pay curtailed on such a consideration. Captain Beauman, I understand, enlists all his men on the above terms; and this makes it difficult for me to get a single recruit: for men will naturally go to those who pay them best. On this account, I should wish to be immediately authorized to offer the same pay to all who may incline to enlist. The next thing I should wish to know, is, whether I must be allowed any *actual expenses* that might attend the enlistment of men, should I send into the country for that purpose. The expense would not be great; and it would enable me to complete my company at once, and bring it the sooner into proper order and discipline.

Also, I should be glad to be informed, if my company is to be allowed the frock which is given to the other troops as a bounty? This frock would be extremely serviceable in summer, while the men are on fatigue; and would put it in their power

to save their uniform much longer. I am, gentlemen, with the greatest respect,

Your most obedient servant,

ALEXANDER HAMILTON, Captain.

HAMILTON TO THE PROVINCIAL CONGRESS.

July 26, 1776.

GENTLEMEN:

I am obliged to trouble you, to remove a difficulty which arises respecting the quantity of subsistence which is to be allowed my men. Inclosed you have the rates of rations, which is the standard allowance of the whole continental, and even the provincial, army; but it seems Mr. Curtenius cannot afford to supply us with more than his contract stipulates; which, by comparison, you will perceive is considerably less than the forementioned rate.

My men, you are sensible, are, by their articles, entitled to the same subsistence with the continental troops: and it would be to them an insupportable discrimination, as well as a breach of the terms of their enlistment, to give them almost a third less provisions than the whole army besides receives. I doubt not you will readily put this matter upon a proper footing.

Hitherto we have drawn our full allowance from Mr. Curtenius; but he did it upon the supposition that he would have a farther consideration for the extraordinary supply.

At present, however, he scruples to proceed in the same way, till it can be put upon a more certain foundation. I am, gentlemen,

With the utmost esteem and respect,

Your most ob't and most humble serv't,

A. HAMILTON,

Captain of New-York Artillery.

HAMILTON TO THE HONORABLE CONVENTION OF NEW-YORK.

NEW-YORK, August, 1776.

It is necessary I should inform you that there is at present a vacancy in my company, arising from the promotion of Lieut. Johnson to a Captaincy in one of the new Gallies (which command, however, he has since resigned for a very particular reason). As Artillery officers are scarce in proportion to the call for them, and as myself and my remaining officers sustain an extraordinary weight of duty on account of the present vacancy, I shall esteem it a favor, if you will be pleased, as soon as possible, to make up my deficiency by a new appointment. It would be productive of much inconvenience should not the inferior officers succeed in course, and from this consideration I doubt not you will think it proper to advance Mr. Gilleland and Mr. Bean, and fill up the third lieutenancy with some other person. I would beg the liberty *warmly* to recommend to your attention Thomas Thompson—now first Sergeant in my company—a man highly deserving of notice and preferment. He has discharged his duty in his present station with uncommon fidelity, assiduity, and expertness. He is a very good disciplinarian—possesses the advantage of having seen a good deal of service in Germany, has a tolerable share of common sense, and will not disgrace the rank of an officer and gentleman. In a word, I verily believe, he will make an excellent Lieutenant, and his advancement will be a great encouragement and benefit to my company in particular, and will be an animating example to all men of merit to whose knowledge it comes. Myself and my officers will be much obliged to the Hon. the Convention to favor us with our commissions with all convenient speed, as they may be highly requisite under some circumstances that may possibly hereafter arise.

A. HAMILTON,
Captain of New-York Artillery.

LT. COL. HAMILTON TO THE PROVINCIAL CONGRESS.

MORRISTOWN, March 6, 1777.

GENTLEMEN:

It is necessary I should inform you of the changes which have happened in your Company of Artillery, which should have been done long ago, had I not been prevented by sickness, from which I am but lately recovered.

General Washington has been pleased to appoint me one of his Aids-de-Camp. Captain-Lieutenant James Moore, a promising officer, and who did credit to the State he belonged to, died about nine weeks ago. Lieutenant James Gilleland, some time before that, resigned his commission, prompted by domestic inconveniences, and *other* motives best known to himself. There remain now only two officers, Lieutenants Bean and Thompson, and about thirty men. The reason that the number of men is so reduced, besides death and desertions, was owing to a breach of orders in Lieutenant Johnson, who first began the enlistment of the company; and who, instead of engaging them during the war, according to the intention of the State, engaged them for the limited term of a twelvemonth. The time of those enlisted by him has expired; and for want of powers to re-engage them, they have mostly entered into other corps.

I have to request you will favor me with instructions as to your future intentions. If you design to retain the company on the particular establishment of the State, it will be requisite to complete the number of officers, and make provision to have the company filled by a new enlistment. In this case, I should beg leave to recommend to your notice, as far as a Captain-Lieutenancy, Mr. Thompson. Mr. Bean is so incurably addicted to a *certain failing*, that I cannot, in justice, give my opinion in favor of his preferment. But if you should determine to resign the company, as I expect you will, considering it as an extraordinary burthen, without affording any special advantages, the Continent will readily take it off your hands, so soon as you shall intimate

your design to relinquish it. I doubt not you will see the propriety of speedily deciding on the matter, which the good of the service requires.

I am, with the sincerest respect, gentlemen,

Your most ob't and most humble servant,

ALEX. HAMILTON.

THE COMMITTEE OF CONVENTION TO HAMILTON.

KINGSTON, March 17, 1777.

DEAR SIR:

We are to inform you, that Robert R. Livingston is, with us, a committee appointed by Convention to correspond with you at Head Quarters. You will give us pleasure in the information that His Excellency is recovered from the illness which had seized him the day before Messrs. Cuyler and Taylor left Head Quarters. Any occurrences in the army which may have happened, you will please to communicate.

In answer to your letter to the Convention, of the sixth of March instant, we are to inform you, that it is determined to permit that company to join the Continental Army, for which you will take the necessary steps. At the same time, you will take some notice of the disposition of our guns, which, as you well know, are all in the Continental service; and unless some little attention is paid to them, we may, perhaps, never see them again.

We are, Sir,

Your most obed't and humble servants,

GOUV. MORRIS,

WM. ALLISON.

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS TO HAMILTON.

KINGSTON, 26 March, 1777.

SIR:

By unavoidable incidents, this letter is delayed beyond the usual time; for which I assure you I am extremely sorry. Your

favor gave great pleasure, as well to the committee as to several members of the House, who are much pleased with your judicious caution, to distinguish between what you sport as your private opinions, and the weighty sentiments of the General.

No circumstance could have more contributed to our happiness, than to hear of the General's recovery; which, believe me, gave universal joy. Be pleased to make my most respectful compliments to his lady.

That the enemy are willing to desert, can hardly be doubted; and a variety of sufficient reasons may easily be assigned.

Want of success is not among the least considerable: add also the want of pay, the want of plunder. I think the situation of the enemy clearly demonstrates the want of political wisdom, and knowledge of war, at the fountain head. To pass over the succession of other blunders they committed, from their attempt on Long Island to their present disposition, their treatment of the soldiery is a monument of folly. First, to prevent their foreign mercenaries from deserting, they kept back arrearages of pay. And secondly, to prevent mutiny, and silence murmurings, they allowed the plundering of a country they intend to conquer. Here common sense alone would have informed them, had they listened to her dictates, that by irritating they would never subdue; and that an indulgence in excesses would relax all discipline. Taught by experience, they begin now to wind up the cords; but as it was said of James the First, they are always either too high or too low. Instead of liberal discipline, they ask servile obedience. Would it not be wise to meet this with taunting insult? To encourage our men in abuse of them, as poor slaves, hired without pay, yet not daring to vent a complaint; and contrast the different situations: at the same time inviting them to come and taste the air of freedom? The English are the proudest people on earth.

You will hear more of a little expedition against Peekskill at Head Quarters than I can tell you. I suppose it is intended as a diversion; if so, it is a ridiculous one.

I am, &c.,

GOUV. MORRIS.

Col. Alex. Hamilton.

LIVINGSTON TO HAMILTON.

KINGSTON, March 29, 1777.

SIR:

We received your favor of the — instant, and am obliged to you not only for your acceptance of a very troublesome challenge, but for the alacrity with which you meet us in the field. We wish it would afford you as many laurels, as you are like to reap elsewhere.

You have heard of the enemy's little excursion to Peekskill; we wish it may not encourage them to make a more serious attempt: may it not be proper to remove the stores to a place of greater safety?

We are somewhat alarmed at accounts of the Indians having left their villages; from whence many conclude, that they have hostile intentions: though as they are much in our power, we cannot be entirely of this opinion.

Your reasons for supposing that the enemy will not proceed to Philadelphia till the beginning of May seem to be conclusive; are you equally well satisfied that they may not open their campaign by sailing to the northward? You have probably seen some affidavits of people who had been to New-York, which were sent by Convention to his Excellency the General. As this does not go by our own express, we do not care to risk any thing more on this subject, which we shall treat more at large in our next.

Time must shortly prove the truth of Mr. Franklin's conjecture, which derives great credit from the several accounts we daily receive of the state of Europe. You will oblige us by communicating any further intelligence you may have received on this subject; its importance renders us solicitous about the event.

I am, Sir, by order,

Your most obed't humble serv't,

ROBERT R. LIVINGSTON.

Col. Alexander Hamilton.

THE COMMITTEE OF CONVENTION TO HAMILTON.

KINGSTON, April 2, 1777.

SIR:

We received yours of the 29th ultimo, and are extremely sorry to hear of your indisposition.

In our last we expressed an apprehension that the enemy might possibly make Hudson's river their first object; not only because they could open their campaign there earlier than they could go to Pennsylvania (as in one case their army would move by land, and in the other by water); but because, having the command of the river, by taking the advantage of a southerly wind, they would have it in their power to run up in a few hours; and, by destroying the boats that are along its banks, render it impossible for General Washington's army to cross till they have marched to Albany; a thing almost impracticable at this season of the year, considering the distance, and badness of the roads. This would enable them, not only to ravage all this State, but to enter Connecticut on its western side, where the disaffection of the people will insure them many friends. We have strained every nerve to prepare for their reception, having vested a power in General George Clinton to make whatever draughts he may think necessary from the militia: in consequence of which, every third man is ordered to be drawn from the southern, and every fifth man from the northern counties. We are not without apprehensions that these heavy draughts will be dreadfully felt, in the want of the necessary supplies for the army and inhabitants, which can hardly be raised under such circumstances in this State: but more remote evils must yield to the pressures of necessity. We inclose you, by direction of Convention, some resolutions lately passed, in order to render the laws against spies, and secret enemies, more effectual. You will be pleased to deliver them, with our respectful compliments, to His Excellency the General.

We are happy to hear of the arrival of the vessel with arms from France, as no supplies can be more necessary.

We flatter ourselves that it will shortly be in our power to communicate more important intelligence from that quarter.

We are, with great respect, Sir,

Your most obedient and humble servants,

WM. ALLISON.
ROB'T R. LIVINGSTON.
GOUV'R MORRIS.

Col. Alex. Hamilton.

HAMILTON TO A COMMITTEE OF THE PROVINCIAL CONGRESS.

HEAD QUARTERS, Morristown, April 5, 1777.

GENTLEMEN:

Since my last I have had the pleasure of receiving your reply to my two favors of the 29th ultimo and 2d current. I am happy enough to be able to inform you, that my indisposition, which was the occasion of my brevity when I last wrote, is now removed.

The opinion I advanced respecting the enemy's not moving before the beginning of May, seems to be shaken, though not entirely overthrown, by some present appearances. We have received information that they are embarking about three thousand men on board of transports, which are lying at the Hook, by way of Staten Island. This, it is conjectured, is with a view to the Delaware; and the supposition is confirmed, by the circumstance of a confederacy lately detected at Philadelphia, who, among other things, were endeavoring, by the temptation of fifty pounds, to engage persons as pilots up that river. The extreme difficulties they must labor under for want of forage, and the infinite hazard they must run by moving with a small body of about five thousand men, with an enemy in the rear, incapable of sparing any considerable body of troops to form a post behind, and be an asylum to them in case of accident,—these circumstances will hardly allow me to think they will be

daring enough to make the attempt at this time. But on the other hand, as they know we are in a progressive state as to numbers, and other matters of importance, and as they have no prospect of early reinforcement, and are in a state of uncertainty as to any, from the bustling aspect of European affairs, it is probable they may conceive a necessity of making a push at all risks. Perhaps, however, this embarkation is intended for some other purpose; to make a diversion, or execute some partisan exploit elsewhere. On the whole, I find it difficult to believe they are yet ready for any capital operation.

As to your apprehensions of an attempt up the North river, I imagine you may discard any uneasiness on that score, although it will be at all times advisable to be on the watch against such a contingency. It is almost reduced to a certainty, that the principal views of the enemy, in the ensuing campaign, will be directed towards the southward, and to Philadelphia more immediately; of which idea, the discovery before mentioned, with respect to pilots, is no inconsiderable confirmation. Philadelphia is an object calculated to strike and attract their attention. It has all along been the main source of supplies towards the war; and the getting it into their possession, would deprive us of a wheel we could very badly spare, in the great political and military machine. They are sensible of this, and are equally sensible, that it contains, in itself, and is surrounded by, a prodigious number of persons attached to them, and inimical to us, who would lend them all the assistance they could, in the further prosecution of their designs. It is also a common and well-grounded rule in war, to strike first and principally, at the capital towns and cities, in order to the conquest of a country.

I must confess I do not see any object equally interesting to draw their efforts to the northward. Operations merely for plundering and devastation can never answer their end; and if they could, one part of the continent would do nearly as well as another. And as to the notion of forming a junction with the northern army, and cutting off the communication between the northern and southern States, I apprehend it will do better in speculation than in practice. Unless the geography of the coun-

try is far different from any thing I can conceive, to effect this would require a chain of posts, and such a number of men at each, as would never be practicable or maintainable, but to an immense army. In their progress, by hanging upon their rear, and seizing every opportunity of skirmishing, their situation might be rendered insupportably uneasy.

But for fear of mistake, the General has determined to collect a considerable body of troops at or about Peekskill, which will not be drawn off till the intentions of the enemy have acquired a decisive complexion. These will be ready, according to conjunctures, either to proceed northerly or southerly, as may be requisite. Every precaution should be taken to prevent the boats from being destroyed, by collecting them, at the first movement of the enemy, under cover of one of the forts, or into some inlet, difficult of access, and easily defensible with a small number of men. The loss of them would be an irreparable disadvantage.

The enemy's attempt upon Peekskill is a demonstration of the folly of having any quantity of stores at places so near the water, and so much exposed to a sudden inroad. There should never be more there than sufficient to answer present demands. We have lost a good deal in this way at different times, and I hope experience will at last make us wiser.

His Excellency lately had a visit from the Oneida Chief and five others. He managed them with a good deal of address, and sent them away perfectly satisfied. He persuaded them to go to Philadelphia, but they declined it, alleging their impatience to return, and remove the erroneous opinions of their countrymen, from the misrepresentations of British emissaries, which they were apprehensive might draw them into some rash proceedings. They parted, after having made the most solemn protestations of friendship and good will. His Excellency has been very busy all day in dispatching the southern post, which has prevented me giving him your resolve. It will, no doubt, be very acceptable; and it is with pleasure I inform you, that the zeal and abilities of the New-York Convention hold the first rank in his estimation.

No news from France, save that the Congress have obtained

a credit there, for which they can draw bills to the amount of £100,000 sterling. This will be extremely serviceable in carrying on a trade with the French. The new troops begin to come in. If we can shortly get any considerable accession of strength, we may be able to strike some brilliant stroke.

I am, Gentlemen, with the greatest respect,

Your most obedient servant,

A. HAMILTON.

P. S. We have been some time endeavoring to negotiate a regular cartel; but it has been lately broken off, principally on account of Major General Lee. General Howe will not allow him to be comprehended under the general idea of American prisoners.

THE COMMITTEE OF CONVENTION TO HAMILTON.

KINGSTON, 8th April, 1777.

SIR:

Yours of the third came safe to hand this day, and gave us great pleasure by certifying your health. The smallness of our numbers will not permit the loss of one useful citizen. It is, therefore, a determined point, that, sick or well, you are by no means to die.

At this distance, it is impossible to determine what the enemy can, or what they cannot, do. But, certainly, if we can bring a respectable force into the field previous to their movements, it must be extremely difficult for them to advance or retreat. The latter, indeed, may be assisted by the works they are throwing up.

Their attempt upon the Delaware is far from improbable. Howe is certainly a stupid fellow: but if he reasons so far, the taking of Philadelphia would give a splendid sight to their ma-

nœuvres in the eyes of Europe. This would be productive of advantage. The seizing that large city, would also afford him much benefit in the several ways which you suggest. But would it not be wise to permit his force to be thus divided, that one part after another might be cut to pieces?

Since the affair at Peekskill, their views this way seem to be less probable. It was, doubtless, unmilitary to warn us of our danger. They will also soon learn that we are in this quarter, in a decent posture of defence; and that may decide their fluctuating councils.

Perhaps, after all, they will find it more convenient to keep post at Amboy, with an advanced party at Brunswick, secure New-York, and carry on a kind of naval partisan war, till the further aid and order of their masters.

You will take care, whenever you write to us matters which ought not to be seen by all, to direct to *one* of *us* only in a separate letter: while that which is merely indifferent, comes under your usual direction. The reason is, that sometimes, when we do not happen to be immediately in the way, your letters are opened by the President; and although no evil consequences have accrued from this as yet, it is nevertheless proper to guard against it.

What you say relative to a cartel, reminds us of the case of Major Edminston, who was taken by General Schuyler at the same time with Sir John Johnson. This gentleman, as His Excellency will recollect, was sent into the enemy's quarters, with a letter to negotiate an exchange for one of three Majors, prisoners in their hands. He hath since returned, with a letter from Howe to General Schuyler, purporting that one of those Majors shall be exchanged for him, he being permitted to join his regiment in Canada. He was three weeks, or thereabouts, travelling from New-York to Albany; of which the Convention being informed, caused him to be made prisoner, and intend sending him to Head Quarters. He is well acquainted with the face of this country, and the disposition of its several inhabitants. He has sufficient interest with the Indians to accomplish an escape. Upon the whole (as it will not be prudent to confine him within

this State), it is submitted, whether it would not be proper to secure him elsewhere until the close of the present campaign?

We are, Sir,

Your most ob't and humble servants,

ROBT. R. LIVINGSTON,
GOUV. MORRIS.

Colonel Hamilton.

LORD STIRLING TO HAMILTON.

BASKENRIDGE, April 12, 1777.

DEAR SIR:

The troops under Colonel McClanagan, which I expected at their quarters between the first and second mountains yesterday, I find took the route by Pluckamin and lodged there last night. I sent this morning at daybreak a messenger to bring them into the Boundbrook Road at Boylans. I understand Col. Spotswood's regiment is on the march by the same route.

The time of Capt. James Scott's company will expire the 14th. Lieut. Kidgelow and the bulk of the men have behaved very well; as they can now be spared, I believe it will be best that I be furnished with His Excellency's dismission of them by the day.

I wrote to His Excellency on Thursday last about the appointment of Wilcocks. If he is approved of I wish you would get both Mr. Williams and him in orders, and that you would be so good as to write him to come to me.

If there be any thing in General Orders within these two or three days that can relate to the troops here, I should be glad to have a copy of them.

I am, very sincerely,

Your affectionate humble servt.,

STIRLING.

Colonel Hamilton.

THE COMMITTEE OF CONVENTION TO HAMILTON.

KINGSTON, 16th April, 1777.

SIR:

We are directed, by Convention, to inclose a Resolution passed this day, in addition to that of the first of April, which we before did ourselves the honor to transmit to His Excellency, by which we hope to put an effectual stop to any further desertions to the enemy; as the disaffected have been hitherto greatly emboldened by their having, for the want of courts, escaped the punishment they deserved. It frequently happens, that ignorant young lads are seduced to enlist with the enemy, and are taken in their way to them. We have sometimes thought that such might safely be admitted to enlist in our regiments (which they are generally inclined to do), as a change of company will often make an alteration in their sentiments, in which case a useful number may be preserved to the community. We wish you to consult the General on this subject, and to favor us with his opinion, by which we shall regulate our future conduct relative to such persons.

We are obliged to you for communicating by Mr. Troop, an account of the engagement of Sunday, in which we equally admire the extreme caution of the enemy, and the spirit of that handful of men by whom they were opposed. The same bravery will, we hope, prove as fortunate, when a fairer occasion offers for its exertion. We have daily information of plots that are formed in this State; and a few days ago apprehended a Colonel who was raising a regiment for the service of the enemy. We hope, by a seasonable severity, to prevent this evil from becoming very extensive.

We are, Sir, &c.

HAMILTON TO LIVINGSTON.

HEAD QUARTERS, MORRISTOWN, April 29, 1777.

SIR:

The inclosed was intended to be sent with the prisoners mentioned in the list; but before this could be conveniently done, Mr. Sims, one of the Chief Justices of the State, came to this town, and informed me, that the Governor and Council were upon the point of adjourning; and that the sending of the prisoners to them, would only be an embarrassment, without answering, at present, any valuable purpose. He considered himself authorized to take the matter under his direction, and desired a sight of the papers relating to it. After perusing them, he determined it was best the prisoners should remain here, until he should receive your further orders on the subject; and delivered me a letter for you, containing a representation of their cases, as they appear to him, in order to know your sense, in what manner they shall be disposed of.

He admits two of them, Woolverton and Silas Howel, to bail.

In addition to the former, I send you a second list of four others that have been lately committed to jail. These are high offenders, and among the number of those who it were to be wished could have an immediate trial and punishment. Isaac Ogden, in particular, is one of the most barefaced impudent fellows that ever came under my observation. He openly acknowledged himself a subject of the King of Great Britain; and flatly refused to give any satisfaction to some questions that were put to him respecting one Moses Nichols, an emissary from the enemy; assigning no other reason for his refusal, than that he had given his word to be silent.

A spirit of disaffection shows itself with so much boldness and violence in different parts of this State, that it is the ardent wish of His Excellency, no delay, which can be avoided, might be used in making examples of some of the most atrocious offend-

ers. If something be not speedily done, to strike a terror into the disaffected, the consequences must be very disagreeable.

Among others, all security to the friends of the American cause will be destroyed; and the natural effect of this, will be an extinction of zeal in seconding and promoting it. Their attachment, if it remain, will be a dead, inactive, useless principle. And the disaffected, emboldened by impunity, will be encouraged to proceed to the most dangerous and pernicious lengths.

I have the honor to be, with great respect,

Your Excellency's most ob't servant,

A. HAMILTON, A. D. C.

To Gov. Livingston.

HUGH KNOX TO HAMILTON.

ST. CROIX, April 31, 1777.

MY DEAR FRIEND:

A pretty fair opportunity just offering for Philadelphia, I could not omit acknowledging the receipt of your very circumstantial and satisfactory letter of the 14th February. The thing has happened which I wished for. We have been amazed here by vague, imperfect, and very false accounts of matters from the Continent: and I always told my friends, that if you survived the campaign, and had an hour of leisure to write to me, I expected a more true, circumstantial, and satisfactory account of matters in your letter, than by all the public papers and private intelligence we had received here. I have but a moment to command at present, and have not time to remark upon your letter. I can only inform you, that it has given high satisfaction to all friends here. We rejoice in your *good character* and *advancement*, which is, indeed, only the just reward of merit. May you still live to deserve more and more from the friends of America, and to justify the choice, and merit the approbation, of he GREAT AND GOOD GENERAL WASHINGTON—a

name which will shine with distinguished lustre in the annals of history—a name dear to the friends of the Liberties of Mankind! *Mark this:* You must be the Annalist and Biographer, as well as the Aide-de-Camp, of General Washington—and the Historiographer of the AMERICAN WAR! I take the liberty to insist on this. I hope you take minutes and keep a Journal! If you have not hitherto, I pray do it henceforth. I seriously, and with all my little influence, urge this upon you. This may be a new and strange thought to you: but if you survive the present troubles, *I aver*—few men will be as well qualified to write the history of the present glorious struggle. God only knows how it may terminate. But however that may be, it will be a most interesting story.

I congratulate you on your recovery from a long and dangerous illness. It is my own case—I am just convalescent, after the severest attack I ever had in my life. I hope to write you more at large soon, and remain, with the tender of every kind and friendly wish,

My dear Sir,

Your affectionate servant,

HUGH KNOX.

HAMILTON TO WILLIAM DUER.

HEAD QUARTERS, Morristown, 6th May, 1777.

SIR:

The bearer of this is Mr. Malmedi, a French gentleman of learning, abilities, and experience. I believe he thinks himself entitled to preferment, and comes to Congress for that purpose. At the recommendation of General Lee, he was made Brigadier General by the State of Rhode Island; and filled the station to the satisfaction of his employers, as appears by a letter from Governor Cook, speaking of him in the highest terms of approbation. This has led him to hope that he should be adopted by

the Continent on an equal footing. But in this he will, no doubt, be mistaken, as there are many insuperable objections to such an event. Among others, it would tend to raise the expectations of the Frenchmen in general, already too high, to a pitch which it would be impossible to gratify or endure. It might not, however, be amiss to do whatever propriety would warrant to keep him in good humor, as he is a man of sense and merit. I think policy would justify the advancing him a step higher than his former Continental rank.

Congress, in the beginning, went upon a very injudicious plan with respect to Frenchmen. To every adventurer that came, without even the shadow of credentials, they gave the rank of Field officers. This circumstance, seconding the aspiring disposition natural to those people, carried the expectations of those who had really any pretensions to the character of officers, to a length that exceeds all the bounds of moderation. As it was impossible to pursue this impolitic plan, the Congress have begun to retrench their excessive liberality; and the consequence has been, universal disgust and discontent.

It would, perhaps, be injurious, as the French are much addicted to national punctilio, to run into the opposite extreme to that first embraced, and, by that mean, create a general clamor and dissatisfaction. Policy suggests the propriety of discriminating a few of the most deserving, and endeavoring to keep them in temper, even by gratifying them beyond what they can reasonably pretend to. This will enable us to shake off the despicable part with safety, and to turn a deaf ear to the exorbitant demands of the many. It will easily be believed in France that their want of merit occasioned their want of success, from the extraordinary marks of favor that have been conferred on others: whereas, the united voice of complaint from the whole, might make ill impressions in their own country, which it is not our interest should exist.

We are already greatly embarrassed with the Frenchmen among us; and, from the genius of the people, shall continue to be so. It were to be wished, that our agents in France, instead of courting them to come out, were instructed to give no encour-

agement but where they could not help it; that is, where applications were made to them by persons countenanced and supported by great men, whom it would be impolitic to disoblige. Be assured, Sir, we shall never be able to satisfy them; and they can be of no use to us, at least for some time. Their ignorance of our language; of the disposition of the people; the resources and deficiencies of the country; their own habits and tempers: all these are disqualifications that put it out of their power to be of any real service to us. You will consider what I have said entirely as my own sentiments, and,

Believe me, with great regard, Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

A. HAMILTON.

William Duer, Esq.

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS TO HAMILTON.

KINGSTON, 16th May, 1777.

SIR:

I had the pleasure of your two favors within two days of each other, and am very happy to find that our form of government meets with your approbation. That there are faults in it is not to be wondered at, for it is the work of men, and of men, perhaps, not the best qualified for such undertakings. I think it deficient, for the want of vigor in the executive; unstable, from the very nature of popular elective governments; and dilatory, from the complexity of the legislature.

For the first, I apologize by hinting the spirit which now reigns in America, suspiciously cautious. For the second, because unavoidable. For the third, because a simple legislature soon possesses itself of too much power for the safety of its subjects. God grant it may work well, for we must live under it.

I cannot persuade myself that Howe will either go to Philadelphia or come hither. In either case, General Washington

can hang upon his rear, and place him in the light rather of a fugitive than a conqueror. If he bends his efforts this way, the Council of Safety, you may depend upon it, will exert themselves to make his situation as uneasy as he would wish; probably more so. The spirit of the Tories, we have great reason to believe, is entirely broken in this State. If it is not, it will soon be so; for they shall have a few more executions, than which nothing can be more efficacious. I speak from experience: but then it is necessary to disperse the victims of public justice throughout different parts of the several States; for nothing but ocular demonstration can convince these incredulous beings that we do really hang them. I wish the several States would follow our example. Pennsylvania, in particular, would experience many good effects from a vigorous manly executive. Adieu.

Your most obedient and humble servant,

GOUV. MORRIS.

Col. Hamilton.

GOUV. MORRIS TO HAMILTON.

KINGSTON, 24th May, 1777.

DEAR SIR:

You certainly had no reason to complain of me, for not informing you of the destruction of the stores at St. John's. True it is, we had a vague report of such a transaction; and we had also an account, from private persons, that the report was confirmed at Albany: but General Gates has never done us the honor to make us acquainted with his intelligence upon that subject; and therefore I was not really warranted to say any thing about it. Apropos, I shall lose two beaver hats if our troops are not in possession of New-York by the first day of July next. If the enemy expect reinforcements, prudence will dictate to us to do something offensive as soon as possible. Would it not be prudent to make several attacks at the same

time? For instance, about Hackensack, Bergen, or wherever else the enemy are in that quarter: upon Brunswick, by way of Round Brook, Bonumtown, and from the southward: upon Fort Independence in Westchester county, or against Harlæm: and upon Long Island, by throwing over some of the eastern troops. If only one should prove successful, it would give splendor to our arms, and dismay the enemy. But our numbers, &c., &c., must govern these things. Howe certainly cannot mean to come this way, unless he is considerably reinforced. He will, unless he is to act on the defensive. I hope that our Generals are very busy fortifying the passes in the Highlands. I fear we shall destroy many men by it when the weather grows warm. Much fatigue prevents that attention to cleanliness which is essential to the health of soldiery. Soldiers should, in my opinion, be as much exercised in the use of arms, and the various evolutions, as is necessary to preserve their bodies in a state of strength and elasticity. The rest of their time may be usefully employed in the care of their clothes, and collecting refreshments. I seriously believe, that if two armies of thirty thousand men each, were to take the field in May, and the one be employed in building fortifications for three months, which the other should storm at the expiration of that term; the odds would be in favor of the assailants, that the campaign would not cost them as many as the enemy. But a truce to idle speculation. Be pleased to direct your next letter to Robert R. Livingston and Christopher Tapin, Esqrs., as I shall not myself be in the way to receive it. We have no news here but this, that the tories are much humbled, and will, I believe, be more so.

Adieu. Yours,

GOUV. MORRIS.

Col. Hamilton.

HAMILTON TO GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

HEAD QUARTERS, SMITH'S CLOVE, July 22, 1777.

DEAR SIR:

Your favor of the eighteenth, from Saratoga, reached me yesterday. Your pronouncing Fort Edward, among the other forts, indefensible, surprises me a little, as it is entirely contrary to the representations of several gentlemen of judgment, who have had an opportunity of seeing and considering its situation; by whom we have been taught to believe that it would be an excellent post, at least for checking and retarding Burgoyne's progress. I agree with you that our principal strength in the quarter you are, will be in the forests and natural strength of the country, and in the want of forage, provisions, carriages, &c., in which the enemy may easily be thrown, by taking away what there are of those articles, which, you observe, have never been in great abundance.

I am doubtful whether Burgoyne will attempt to penetrate far, and whether he will not content himself with harassing our back settlements by parties assisted by the savages, who, it is to be feared, will pretty generally be tempted, by the enemy's late successes, to confederate in hostilities against us.

This doubt arises from some appearances that indicate a southern movement of General Howe's army, which, if it should really happen, will certainly be a barrier against any further impressions of Burgoyne; for it cannot be supposed he would be rash enough to plunge into the bosom of the country without an expectation of being met by General Howe. Things must prove very adverse to us indeed, should he make such an attempt and *not be ruined by it.* I confess, however, that the appearances I allude to do not carry a full evidence in my mind; because they are opposed by others of a contradictory kind; and because I cannot conceive upon what principle of common sense, or military propriety, Howe can be running away from Burgoyne to the southward.

It is much to be wished he may, even though it should give

him the possession of Philadelphia, which by our remoteness from it, may very well happen. In this case, we may not only, if we think proper, retaliate, by aiming a stroke at New-York; but we may come upon him with the greatest part of our collective force, to act against that part which is under him. We shall then be certain that Burgoyne cannot proceed, and that a small force of continental troops will be sufficient for that partisan war which he must carry on the rest of the campaign.

A small force will also be sufficient to garrison the posts in the Highlands, and prevent any danger there; so that we shall be able to bring nearly the whole of the continental army against Mr. Howe. The advantages of this are obvious. Should he be satisfied with the splendor of his acquisition, and shut himself up in Philadelphia, we can ruin him by confinement. Should he leave a garrison there, and go forward, we can either fall upon that or his main body, diminished as it will be by such a measure, with our whole force. There will, however, be many disagreeable consequences attending such an event; amongst which, the foremost is, the *depreciation of our currency*, which, from the importance in which Philadelphia is held, cannot fail to ensue.

I am, dear Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

ALEX. HAMILTON.

HAMILTON TO DR. KNOX.

* * * This event [the evacuation of Ticonderoga*], redounds very little to our credit. For if the post was untenable, or required a larger number of troops to defend it than could be spared for the purpose, it ought long ago to have been foreseen and given up. Instead of that, we have kept a large quantity of cannon in it, and have been heaping up very valuable magazines of stores and provisions, that, in the critical moment of defence,

* July 5, 1777.

are abandoned and lost. This affair will be attended with several evil consequences; for besides the loss of our stores, which we cannot well afford, it opens a new and easy door by which to penetrate the northern States. It will fix the hitherto fluctuating disposition of the Indians in that quarter in their favor, and expose the frontiers of the adjacent country to their depredations. But though it is a misfortune we have reason to lament, I dare say it will be regarded with you as much more important than it really is, and as materially endangering the success of our cause, which is by no means the case. Our opposition is at this time too well matured, and has too great stability, to be shaken by an accident of that kind. While we have a respectable army in the field, and resources to feed, clothe, and arm them, we are safe. We have had a force sufficient for the foregoing part of the campaign, to maintain such a superiority over the main army of the enemy as effectually to hinder them from attaining any of their purposes. And, to the northward, with the reinforcements sent up to succor the retreating garrison of Ticonderoga, and the militia flocking in from New England, I think there is little doubt we have by this time a force adequate to give Mr. Burgoyne a seasonable check. One good effect will result from the misfortune, which is, that it will stimulate the eastern States to greater exertions than they might otherwise make.

By our last advices, the enemy were in possession of all the country between Ticonderoga and Fort George; and our army, nearly equal in number to them, were about to take post somewhere between Fort Edward and Saratoga.

The consequences of this northern affair will depend much upon the part that Howe acts. If he were to co-operate with Burgoyne, it would demand our utmost efforts to counteract them. But if he should go towards the southward, all or most of the advantages of Burgoyne's success will be lost. He will either be obliged to content himself with the possession of Ticonderoga, and the dependent fortresses, and with carrying on a partisan war the rest of the campaign; or he must precipitate himself into certain ruin, by attempting to advance into the country with a very incompetent force.

Appearances lead us to suppose that Howe is fool enough to meditate a southern expedition; for he has now altered his station at Staten Island, mentioned above, and has fallen down to the Hook. Judging it morally certain that there would be a cooperation of the two armies, we thought it expedient to march northerly; and had accordingly reached within fourteen miles of New Windsor, the place where we could cross the North River without danger or interruption. But this new movement of the enemy's fleet, has induced us to return a few miles, and make a disposition for marching southerly. We shall, however, be cautious how we proceed on that course, lest nothing more than a feint is intended, to divert us from the real object.

If they go to the southward in earnest, they must have the capture of Philadelphia in view; for there is no other inducement. We shall endeavor to get there in time to oppose them; and shall have the principal part of the continental force, and a large body of spirited militia, many of them, from their services during the last campaign, pretty well inured to arms, to make the opposition with. Yet I would not have you to be much surprised if Philadelphia should fall; for the enemy will doubtless go there with a determination to succeed at all hazard; and we shall not be able to prevent them, without risking a general action, the expediency of which will depend upon circumstances. If the militia turn out with that zeal we have a right to expect, from their conduct when the enemy made their last experiment in the Jersies, and were supposed to be going to Philadelphia, we may do it without much inconvenience. If they fall materially short of it, we shall be obliged to confine ourselves to a skirmishing opposition, which we cannot expect will be effectual. It may be asked, If, to avoid a general engagement, we give up objects of the first importance, what is to hinder the enemy from carrying every important point, and ruining us? My answer is, that our hopes are not placed in any particular city or spot of ground, but in the preserving a good army, furnished with proper necessaries, to take advantage of favorable opportunities, and waste and defeat the enemy by piecemeal. Every new post they take, requires a new division of their

forces, and enables us to strike with our united force against a part of theirs: and such is their present situation, that another Trenton affair will amount to a complete victory on our part; for they are at too low an ebb to bear another stroke of the kind. Perhaps, before I may have an opportunity of sending this, facts will unfold what I am now endeavoring to anticipate by conjecture.

You will expect some animadversions on the temper and views of the French nation. I presume you are nearly as well acquainted with the assistance they are giving us as I am, both by their intrigues in foreign courts, and by supplies of every kind of warlike stores and apparatus.

It does not admit of a doubt that they are interested to wish us success; and their conduct plainly shows, they are willing to give us every aid essential to our preservation. But it is natural they should desire to do it with as much convenience to themselves as they can. I apprehend they are not over fond of plunging themselves into a war with England if they can avoid it, and still answer the end they have to pursue: and, indeed, from the evident reluctance shown on the part of the latter, to do any thing that may bring about such an event, it becomes extremely difficult to draw her into it. The conclusion we may make, is, that France will not wish to force England into a war, unless she finds our affairs require it absolutely; and England will not enter into one, till she is compelled to do it.

My best respects to all friends; and I beg you will believe me to be, with unabated regard,

Dear Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

A. HAMILTON.

HAMILTON TO PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.

Sept. 18, 1777.

SIR:

If Congress have not left Philadelphia, they ought to do it immediately without fail; for the enemy have the means of

throwing a party this night into the city. I just now passed the Valley Ford—in doing which a party of the enemy came down and fired upon us in the boat, by which means I lost my horse—one man was killed, and another wounded. The boats were abandoned, and will fall into their hands. I did all I could to prevent this, but to no purpose.

I have the honor to be,
With much respect,
Sir, your most obedient servant,
A. HAMILTON.

To Hon. John Hancock.

TO THE HONORABLE JOHN HANCOCK, PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.

September 18, 1777, 9 o'clock at night.

SIR:

I did myself the honor to write you a hasty line this evening, giving it as my opinion, that the city was no longer a place of safety for you. I write you again, lest that letter should not get to hand. The enemy are on the road to Swedes Ford, the main body about four miles from it. They sent a party this evening to Daviser's ferry, which fired upon me and some others in crossing it, killed one man, wounded another, and disabled my horse.

They came on so suddenly, that one boat was left adrift on the other side, which will of course fall into their hands; and, by the help of that, they will get possession of another, which was abandoned by those who had the direction of it, and left afloat, in spite of every thing that I could do to the contrary. These two boats will convey fifty men across at a time, so that in a few hours they may throw over a large party, perhaps sufficient to overmatch the militia who may be between them and the city. This renders the situation of Congress extremely precarious, if they are not on their guard: my apprehensions for them are great, though it is not improbable they may not be realized.

The most cogent reasons oblige me to join the army this night, or I should have waited upon you myself. I am in hopes our army will be up with the enemy before they pass Schuylkill: if they are, something serious will ensue.

I have the honor to be,
With much respect,
Sir, your most obedient,
A. HAMILTON.

HAMILTON TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.

PHILADELPHIA, 22d September, 1777.

SIR:

I left camp last evening, and came to this city to superintend the collection of blankets and clothing for the army. Mr. Lovell sends to inform me there is an express going off to Congress; and I do myself the honor to communicate a brief state of things when I left camp. The enemy moved yesterday, from where they lay opposite to Valley Forge, &c., higher up the river, on their old scheme of gaining our right. I don't know precisely where they halted; but our army was preparing to move up also, to counteract them.

I am this morning told, they marched about twelve o'clock at night for that purpose. The general opinion was, that the enemy would attempt crossing this day: every appearance justified the supposition.

We had intelligence that the enemy had, the night before last, surprised Generals Smallwood and Wayne, and consequently dispersed them, after a small opposition. The loss, it is said, was not great; and our troops were re-assembling fast at the Red Lion. This seems to have been a bad look out, and is somewhat disconcerting.

By a letter from General McDougal, received this morning, it appears he was, on the twentieth, in the morning, at Second River, just setting out on his march toward Woodbridge. He is

pressing forward with all possible expedition. The troops were pretty well refreshed, and in good spirits.

I have, &c.,

A. HAMILTON.

WASHINGTON TO HAMILTON.

HEAD QUARTERS, PHILADELPHIA COUNTY, 30th Oct., 1777.

DEAR SIR:

It having been judged expedient by the members of a council of war, held yesterday, that one of the gentlemen of my family should be sent to General Gates, in order to lay before him the state of this army, and the situation of the enemy; and to point out to him the many happy consequences that will accrue from an immediate reinforcement being sent from the northern army; I have thought it proper to appoint you to that duty, and desire that you will immediately set out for Albany; at which place, or in the neighborhood, I imagine you will find General Gates.

You are so fully acquainted with the principal points on which you are sent, namely, the state of our army, and the situation of the enemy, that I shall not enlarge on those heads. What you are chiefly to attend to, is to point out, in the clearest and fullest manner, to General Gates, the absolute necessity that there is for his detaching a very considerable part of the army at present under his command, to the reinforcement of this; a measure that will, in all probability, reduce General Howe to the same situation in which General Burgoyne now is, should he attempt to remain in Philadelphia without being able to remove the obstructions in the Delaware, and open a free communication with his shipping. The force which the members of the council of war judge it safe and expedient to draw down at present, are the three New Hampshire and fifteen Massachusetts regiments, with Lee's and Jackson's two of the sixteen, additional. But it is more than probable that General Gates may have detained part of those troops to the reduction of Ticonderoga, should the

enemy not have evacuated it; or to the garrisoning it. If they should, in that case the reinforcement will be according to circumstances; but, if possible, let it be made up to the same number out of other corps. If, upon your meeting with General Gates, you should find that he intends, in consequence of his success, to employ the troops under his command upon some expedition, by the prosecution of which the common cause will be more benefited than by their being sent down to reinforce this army, it is not my wish to give any interruption to the plan. But if he should have nothing more in contemplation than those particular objects which I have mentioned to you, and which it is unnecessary to commit to paper; in that case you are to inform him, that it is my desire that the reinforcements before mentioned, or such parts of them as can be safely spared, be immediately put in motion to join the army.

I have understood that General Gates has already detached Nixon's and Glover's brigades to join General Putnam; and General Dickinson informs me, Sir Henry Clinton has come down the river with his whole force: if this be a fact, you are to desire General Putnam to send the two brigades forward with the greatest expedition, as there can be no occasion for them there.

I expect you will meet Colonel Morgan's corps upon their way down: if you do, let them know how essential their services are to us; and desire the Colonel or commanding officer, to hasten their march as much as is consistent with the health of the men after their late fatigues. G. W.

P. S. I ordered the detachment belonging to General McDougal's division to come forward. If you meet them, direct those belonging to Greene's, Angel's, Chandler's, and Duryee's regiments, not to cross Delaware, but to proceed to Red Bank.

HAMILTON TO WASHINGTON.

FISHKILL, Nov. 2, 1777.

DEAR SIR:

I lodged last night in the neighborhood of New Windsor. This morning early I met Colonel Morgan with his corps, about a mile from it, in march for head quarters. I told him the necessity of making all the dispatch he could, so as not to fatigue his men too much, which he has promised to do.

I understood from Colonel Morgan, that all the northern army were marching down on both sides the river, and would, probably, be to-morrow at New Windsor and this place; and that General Putnam had held a council for the general disposition of them, in which it was resolved to send you four thousand men, and to keep the rest on this side the river. I came here in expectation that matters were in such a train as to enable me to accomplish my errand without going any further, unless it should be to hasten the troops that were on their march: but on my arrival, I learned from Mr. Hughes, an Aid-de-Camp of General Gates, that the following disposition of the northern army had taken place.

General Patterson's, Glover's, and Nixon's brigades, and Colonel Warner's mountain boys, to remain in and about Albany: barracks building for them. General Poor's brigade, marching down this side of the river to join General Putnam, will be here probably to-morrow. General Learned's brigade, Morgan's corps, Warner's brigade of Massachusetts militia, and some regiments of New-York militia, on their march on the west side of the river.

I have directed General Putnam, in your name, to send forward, with all dispatch, to join you, the two continental brigades, and Warner's militia brigade: this last is to serve till the latter end of this month. Your instructions did not comprehend any militia: but as there are certain accounts here, that most of the troops from New-York are gone to reinforce General Howe; and as so large a proportion of continental troops have been de-

tained at Albany; I concluded you would not disapprove of a measure calculated to strengthen you, though but for a small time, and have ventured to adopt it on that presumption.

Being informed by General Putnam, that General Wynds, with seven hundred Jersey militia, was at King's Ferry, with intention to cross to Peekskill, I prevailed upon him to relinquish that idea, and send off an immediate order for them to march towards Red Bank. It is possible, however, unless your Excellency supports this order by an application from yourself, he may march his men home, instead of marching them to the place he has been directed to repair to.

Neither Lee's, Jackson's regiments, nor the detachments belonging to General McDougal's division, have yet marched. I have urged their being sent; and an order has been dispatched for their instantly proceeding. Colonel Hughes is pressing some fresh horses for me. The moment they are ready, I shall recross the river, in order to fall in with the troops on the other side, and make all the haste I can to Albany, to get the three brigades there sent forward.

Will your Excellency permit me to observe, that I have some doubts, under present circumstances and appearances, of the propriety of leaving the regiments proposed to be left in this quarter? But if my doubts on this subject were stronger than they are, I am forbid, by the sense of council, from interfering in the matter.

General Poor's brigade is just arrived here: they will proceed to join you with all expedition. So strongly am I impressed with the importance of endeavoring to crush Mr. Howe, that I am apt to think it would be advisable to draw off all the continental troops. Had this been determined on, General Warner's sixteen hundred militia might have been left here.

I have the honor to be,
With the warmest esteem and respect,
Your Excellency's most obedient servant,
A. HAMILTON.

HAMILTON TO WASHINGTON.

ALBANY, November, 1777.

DEAR SIR:

I arrived here yesterday at noon, and waited upon General Gates immediately, on the business of my mission; but was sorry to find that his ideas did not correspond with yours, for drawing off the number of troops you directed. I used every argument in my power, to convince him of the propriety of the measure; but he was inflexible in the opinion, that two brigades, at least, of continental troops, should remain in and near this place. His reasons were, that the intelligence of Sir Henry Clinton's having gone to join Howe, was not sufficiently authenticated to put it out of doubt; that there was, therefore, a possibility of his returning up the river, which might expose the finest arsenal in America (as he calls the one here) to destruction, should this place be left so bare of troops as I proposed; and that the want of conveniencies, and the difficulty of the roads, would make it impossible to remove artillery and stores for a considerable time; that the New England States would be left open to the depredations and ravages of the enemy; that it would put it out of his power to enterprise any thing against Ticonderoga, which he thinks might be done in the winter, and which he considers it of importance to undertake.

The force of these reasons did by no means strike me; and I did every thing in my power to show they were unsubstantial: but all I could effect, was to have one brigade dispatched, in addition to those already marched. I found myself infinitely embarrassed, and was at a loss how to act. I felt the importance of strengthening you as much as possible: but, on the other hand, I found insuperable inconveniences, in acting diametrically opposite to the opinion of a gentleman, whose successes have raised him to the highest importance. General Gates has won the entire confidence of the Eastern States. If disposed to do it, by addressing himself to the prejudices of the people, he would find no difficulty to render a measure odious, which it

might be said, with plausibility enough to be believed, was calculated to expose them to unnecessary dangers, notwithstanding their exertions, during the campaign, had given them the fullest title to repose and security. General Gates has influence and interest elsewhere: he might use it, if he pleased, to discredit the measure there also. On the whole, it appeared to me dangerous, to insist on sending more troops from hence, while General Gates appeared so warmly opposed to it. Should any accident, or inconvenience, happen in consequence of it, there would be too fair a pretext for censure: and many people are too well disposed to lay hold of it. At any rate, it might be considered as using him ill, to take a step so contrary to his judgment, in a case of this nature. These considerations, and others which I shall be more explicit in when I have the pleasure of seeing you, determined me not to insist upon sending either of the other brigades remaining here. I am afraid what I have done, may not meet with your approbation, as not being perhaps fully warranted by your instructions: but I ventured to do what I thought right, hoping that, at least, the goodness of my intention will excuse the error of my judgment.

I was induced to this relaxation the more readily, as I had directed to be sent on, two thousand militia, which were not expected by you; and a thousand continental troops out of those proposed to be left with General Putnam, which I have written to him, since I found how matters were circumstanced here, to forward to you with all dispatch. I did this for several reasons: because your reinforcement would be more expeditious from that place than from this: because two thousand continental troops at Peckskill will not be wanted in its present circumstances; especially as it was really necessary to have a body of continental troops at this place, for the security of the valuable stores here: and I should not, if I had my wish, think it expedient to draw off more than two of the three brigades now here. This being the case, one of the ends you proposed to be answered, by leaving the ten regiments with General Putnam, will be equally answered by the troops here; I mean that of covering and fortifying the Eastern States: and one thousand conti-

nental troops in addition to the militia collected, and that may be collected, here, will be sufficient, in the Highlands, for covering the country down that way, and carrying on the works necessary to be raised for the defence of the river.

The troops gone, and going, to reinforce you, are near five thousand rank and file, continental troops; and two thousand five hundred Massachusetts and New Hampshire militia. These and the seven hundred Jersey militia, will be a larger reinforcement than you expected, though not quite an equal number of continental troops; nor exactly in the way directed. General Lincoln tells me, the militia are very excellent; and though their time will be out by the last of this month, you will be able, if you think proper, to order the troops still remaining here, to join you by the time their term of service expires.

I cannot forbear being uneasy, lest my conduct should prove displeasing to you: but I have done what, considering all circumstances, appeared to me most eligible and prudent.

Vessels are preparing to carry the brigade to New Windsor, which will embark this evening. I shall, this afternoon, set out on my return to camp; and on my way, shall endeavor to hasten the troops forward.

I have the honor to be,
With great esteem and respect,
Your Excellency's most ob't,
ALEX. HAMILTON.

HAMILTON TO GATES.

ALBANY, November 5, 1777.

SIR:

By inquiry, I have learned that General Patterson's brigade, which is the one you propose to send, is by far the weakest of the three now here, and does not consist of more than about six hundred rank and file fit for duty. It is true, that there is a militia regiment with it of about two hundred; but the time of service for which this regiment is engaged, is so near expiring,

that it would be past by the time the men could arrive at their destination.

Under these circumstances, I cannot consider it either as compatible with the good of the service, or my instructions from His Excellency General Washington, to consent that that brigade be selected from the three to go to him; but I am under the necessity of desiring, by virtue of my orders from him, that one of the others be substituted instead of this; either General Nixon's, or General Glover's; and that you will be pleased to give immediate orders for its embarkation.

Knowing that General Washington wished me to pay the greatest deference to your judgment, I ventured so far to deviate from the instructions he gave me, as to consent, in compliance with your opinion, that two brigades should remain here instead of one. At the same time permit me to observe, that I am not myself sensible of the expediency of keeping more than one with the detached regiments in the neighborhood of this place; and that my ideas coincide with those gentlemen whom I have consulted on the occasion, whose judgment I have much more reliance upon than on my own, and who must be supposed to have a thorough knowledge of all the circumstances. Their opinion is, that one brigade, and the regiments before mentioned, would amply answer the purposes of this post. When I preferred your opinion to other considerations, I did not imagine you would pitch upon a brigade little more than half as large as the others: and finding this to be the case, I indispensably owe it to my duty, to desire, in His Excellency's name, that another may go instead of the one intended, and without loss of time. As it may be conducive to dispatch, to send Glover's brigade, if agreeable to you, you will give orders accordingly.

I have the honor to be,
With real respect and esteem,
Sir, your most obedient servant,
A. HAMILTON.

General Gates.

HAMILTON TO WASHINGTON.

NEW WINDSOR, November 10th, 1777.

DEAR SIR:

I arrived here last night from Albany. Having given General Gates a little time to recollect himself, I renewed my remonstrances on the necessity and propriety of sending you more than one brigade of the three he had detained with him; and finally prevailed upon him to give orders for Glover's in addition to Patterson's brigade, to march this way.

As it was thought conducive to expedition, to send the troops by water, as far as it could be done, I procured all the vessels that could be had at Albany, fit for the purpose; but could not get more than sufficient to take Patterson's brigade. It was embarked the seventh instant; but the wind has been contrary: they must probably be here to-day. General Glover's brigade marched at the same time, on the east side of the river, the roads being much better than on this side. I am at this moment informed, that one sloop, with a part of Patterson's, has arrived, and that the others are in sight. They will immediately proceed, by water, to King's Ferry, and thence take the shortest route.

I am pained beyond expression to inform your Excellency, that on my arrival here, I find every thing has been neglected and deranged by General Putnam; and that the two brigades, Poor's and Learned's, still remain here and on the other side of the river at Fishkill. Colonel Warner's militia, I am told, have been drawn to Peekskill, to aid in an expedition against New-York, which, it seems, is, at this time, the hobby-horse with General Putnam. Not the least attention has been paid to my order, in your name, for a detachment of one thousand men from the troops hitherto stationed at this post. Every thing is sacrificed to the whim of taking New-York.

The two brigades of Poor and Learned, it appears, would not march for want of money and necessaries; several of the regiments having received no pay for six or eight months past. There has been a high mutiny among the former on this account,

in which a captain killed a man, and was himself shot by his comrade. These difficulties, for want of proper management, have stopped the troops from proceeding. Governor Clinton has been the only man who has done any thing towards removing them; but for want of General Putnam's co-operation, has not been able to effect it. He has only been able to prevail with Learned's brigade, to agree to march to Goshen; in hopes, by getting them once on the go, to induce them to continue their march. On coming here, I immediately sent for Colonel Bailey, who now commands Learned's brigade, and persuaded him to engage to carry the brigade on to head quarters as fast as possible. This he expects to effect by means of five or six thousand dollars, which Governor Clinton was kind enough to borrow for me, and which Colonel Bailey thinks will keep the men in good humor till they join you. They marched this morning towards Goshen.

I shall, as soon as possible, see General Poor, and do every thing in my power to get him along; and hope I shall be able to succeed.

The plan I before laid, having been totally deranged, a new one has become necessary. It is now too late to send Warner's militia; by the time they reached you, their term of service would be out. The motive for sending them, which was to give you a speedy reinforcement, has, by the past delay, been superseded.

By Governor Clinton's advice, I have sent an order, in the most emphatical terms, to General Putnam, immediately to dispatch all the continental troops under him to your assistance; and to detain the militia instead of them.

My opinion is, that the only present use for troops in this quarter, is, to protect the country from the depredations of little plundering parties; and for carrying on the works necessary for the defence of the river. Nothing more ought to be thought of. 'Tis only wasting time, and misapplying men, to employ them in a suicidal parade against New-York: for in this it will undoubtedly terminate. New-York is no object, if it could be taken: and to take it, would require more men than could be spared

from more substantial purposes. Governor Clinton's ideas coincide with mine. He thinks that there is no need of more continental troops here, than a few to give a spur to the militia in working upon the fortifications. In pursuance of this, I have given the directions before mentioned. If General Putnam attends to them, the troops under him may be with you nearly as early as any of the others (though he has, unluckily, marched them down to Tarrytown); and General Glover's brigade, when it gets up, will be more than sufficient to answer the true end of this post.

If your Excellency agrees with me in opinion, it will be well to send instant directions to General Putnam, to pursue the object I have mentioned: for I doubt whether he will attend to any thing I shall say, notwithstanding it comes in the shape of a positive order. I fear, unless you interpose, the works here will go on so feebly, for want of men, that they will not be completed in time: whereas, it appears to me of the greatest importance they should be pushed with the utmost vigor. Governor Clinton will do every thing in his power. I wish General Putnam was recalled from the command of this post, and Governor Clinton would accept it: the blunders and caprices of the former are endless. Believe me, Sir, nobody can be more impressed with the importance of forwarding the reinforcements coming to you, with all speed; nor could any body have endeavored to promote it more than I have done: but the *ignorance* of some, and the *design* of others, have been almost insuperable obstacles. I am very unwell; but I shall not spare myself to get things immediately in a proper train; and for that purpose intend, unless I receive other orders from you, to continue with the troops in the progress of their march. As soon as I get General Poor's brigade in march, I shall proceed to General Putnam's at Peekskill.

I have, &c.,

ALEX. HAMILTON.

His Excellency, General Washington.

HAMILTON TO WASHINGTON.

NEW WINDSOR, November 12, 1777.

DEAR SIR:

I have been detained here these two days by a fever, and violent rheumatic pains throughout my body. This has prevented my being active, in person, for promoting the purposes of my errand; but I have taken every other method in my power, in which Governor Clinton has obligingly given me all the aid he could. In answer to my pressing application to General Poor, for the immediate marching of his brigade, I was told they were under an operation for the itch; which made it impossible for them to proceed till the effects of it were over. By a letter, however, of yesterday, General Poor informs me, he would certainly march this morning. I must do him the justice to say, he appears solicitous to join you; and that I believe the past delay is not owing to any fault of his, but is wholly chargeable on General Putnam. Indeed, Sir, I owe it to the service to say, that every part of this gentleman's conduct is marked with blunder and negligence, and gives general disgust.

Parsons' brigade will join you, I hope, in five or six days from this. Learned's may do the same. Poor's will, I am persuaded, make all the haste they can for the future. And Glover's may be expected at Fishkill to-night; whence they will be pressed forward as fast as I can have any influence to make them go. But I am sorry to say, the disposition for marching, in the officers and men in general, of these troops, does not keep pace with my wishes, or the exigency of the occasion. They have, unfortunately, imbibed an idea, that they have done their part of the business of the campaign, and are now entitled to repose. This, and the want of pay, make them averse to a long march at this advanced season.

* * * In a letter from General Putnam, just now received by Governor Clinton, he appears to have been, the 10th instant, at King's Street, at the White Plains. I have had no answer to my last applications. The enemy appear to have stripped New-

York very bare. The people there, that is, the tories, are in a great fright: this adds to my anxiety, that the reinforcements from this quarter to you are not in greater forwardness and more considerable.

I have written to General Gates, informing him of the accounts of the situation of New-York with respect to troops, and the probability of the force gone to Howe being greater than was at first expected; to try if this will not *extort* from him a further reinforcement. I don't, however, expect much from him; as he pretends to have in view an expedition against Ticonderoga, to be undertaken in the winter: and he knows that, under the sanction of this idea, calculated to catch the eastern people, he may, without censure, retain the troops. And as I shall be under a necessity of speaking plainly to your Excellency, when I have the pleasure of seeing you, I shall not hesitate to say, I doubt whether you would have had a man from the northern army, if the whole could have been kept at Albany with any decency. Perhaps you will think me blamable in not having exercised the powers you gave me, and given a positive order. Perhaps I have been so: but, deliberately weighing all circumstances, I did not, and do not, think it advisable to do it.

I have the honor to be,
With unfeigned esteem and regard,
Your Excellency's most ob't servant,
A. HAMILTON.

His Excellency General Washington.

HAMILTON TO GATES.

FISHKILL, November 12, 1777.

SIR:

Ever since my arrival in this quarter, I have been endeavoring to collect the best idea I could of the state of things in New-York, in order the better to form a judgment of the probable reinforcement gone to General Howe. On the whole, this is a fact well ascertained, that New-York has been stripped as bare

as possible: that in consequence of this, the few troops there, and the inhabitants, are under so strong apprehensions of an attack, as almost to amount to a *panic;* that to supply the deficiency of men, every effort is making to excite the citizens to arms for the defence of the city. For this purpose, the public papers are full of addresses to them, that plainly speak the apprehensions prevailing on the occasion.

Hence I infer, that a formidable force is gone to General Howe. The calculations made by those who have had the best opportunities of judging, carry the number from six to seven thousand. If so, the number gone, and going, to General Washington, is far inferior; five thousand at the utmost. The militia were all detained by General Putnam till it became too late to send them.

The state of things I gave you when I had the pleasure of seeing you, was, to the best of my knowledge, sacredly true. I give you the present information, that you may decide, whether any further succor can with propriety come from you.

The fleet, with the troops on board, sailed out of the Hook on the fifth instant. This circumstance demonstrates, beyond the possibility of doubt, that it is General Howe's fixed intention to endeavor to hold Philadelphia at all hazards; and removes all danger of any further operations up the North River this winter. Otherwise, Sir Henry Clinton's movement, at this advanced season, is altogether inexplicable.

If you can with propriety afford any further assistance, the most expeditious manner of conveying it will be to acquaint General Putnam of it, that he may send on the troops with him, to be replaced by them. You, Sir, best know the uses to which the troops with you are to be applied, and will determine accordingly. I am certain it is not His Excellency's wish to frustrate any plan you may have in view for the benefit of the service, so far as it can possibly be avoided, consistent with a due attention to more important objects.

I am, with respect, Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

ALEX. HAMILTON, A. D. C.

To General Gates.

HAMILTON TO WASHINGTON.

PEEKSKILL, Nov. 15, 1777.

DEAR SIR:

I arrived at this place last night, and unfortunately find myself unable to proceed any further. Imagining I had gotten the better of my complaint, which confined me at Governor Clinton's, and anxious to be about attending to the march of the troops, the day before yesterday I crossed the ferry, in order to fall in with General Glover's brigade, which was on its march from Poughkeepsie to Fishkill. I did not, however, see it myself, but received a letter from Colonel Shepherd, who commands the frigate, informing me he would be last night at Fishkill, and this night at King's ferry. Wagons, &c., are provided on the other side for his accommodation; so that there need be no delay but what is voluntary; and I believe Colonel Shepherd is as well disposed as could be wished to hasten his march. General Poor's brigade crossed the ferry the day before yesterday. Two York regiments, Courtland's and Livingston's, are with them: they were unwilling to be separated from the brigade, and the brigade from them. General Putnam was unwilling to keep them with him: and if he had consented to do it, the regiments to displace them would not join you six days as soon as these. The troops now remaining with General Putnam will amount to about the number you intended, though they are not exactly the same. He has detached Colonel Charles Webb's regiment to you. He *says* the troops with him are not in a condition to march, being destitute of shoes, stockings, and other necessaries: but I believe the true reasons of his being unwilling to pursue the mode pointed out by you, were his aversion to the York troops, and his desire to retain General Parsons with him.

I am, with much respect and esteem,

Your Excellency's most ob't serv't,

A. HAMILTON.

To General Washington.

WASHINGTON TO HAMILTON.

HEAD-QUARTERS, November 15, 1777.

DEAR SIR:

I have duly received your several favors, from the time you left me to that of the twelfth instant. I approve entirely of all the steps you have taken; and have only to wish, that the exertions of those you have had to deal with, had kept pace with your zeal and good intentions. I hope your health will, before this, have permitted you to push on the rear of the whole reinforcement beyond New Windsor. Some of the enemy's ships have arrived in the Delaware; but how many have troops on board, I cannot exactly ascertain. The enemy have lately damaged Fort Miflin considerably: but our people keep possession, and seem determined to do so to the last extremity. Our loss in men has been but small. Captain Treat is unfortunately among the killed. I wish you a safe return,

And am, dear Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

G. WASHINGTON.

Lt. Col. Hamilton.

HUGH KNOX TO HAMILTON.

ST. CROIX, December 10, 1777.

DEAR HAMILTON:

The fine, impartial, laconic, and highly descriptive account you favored me with of the last year's campaign, in your letter of March last, excited in me, and many of your other friends here, an earnest desire of further accounts from your pen, of the succeeding fortunes of the Great American War: a war which will, one day, shine more illustriously in the historic page, than any which has happened since the times of Nimrod and the Giants; and deservedly, on account of the goodness of the cause, the grandeur of the object, the eclat of the Generals, the bravery of the troops—and (alas! that I should be obliged to add) of

the cruelty and ferocity which has marked the route of your enemies; and the tons of brothers' blood which have been shed on the unhappy occasion!

I wrote two answers to your obliging letter, both of which I hope have reached you; and in both of which I have urged it upon you, to make and collect such memoirs as the urgency of your affairs will permit you; which may furnish materials for an accurate history of the war, when you shall have leisure to fill up and embellish such a skeleton, with all that elegance and dignity of which your fine pen is capable.

The honorable post you hold under the GREAT General Washington, and so near his person, will give you a peculiar advantage for delineating his character, both in his amiable private virtues, and military abilities. And depend upon it, the very minutiæ of that incomparable man will be read with avidity by posterity. You know me too well, I hope, to suspect me of superstition; yet I feel myself, at times, under a strong impulse to *prophesy*, that *Washington* was born for the deliverance of America—that that Providence who has raised and trained him up for that very purpose, will watch over his *sacred* life with a paternal and solicitous care; will shield his head in every day of battle—*will* give him to see America *free*, *flourishing*, and *happy*—and *will* adorn his fame, among latest posterity, with a Garland of Laurel, more verdant, blooming, and enviable, than ever adorned the brow of a *Marlborough!*

The bearer of this line (if he should be indeed so fortunate as to put it into your hand) is our worthy friend, Mr. Cornelius Durant, who is possessed of an ardent desire of having the honor of a short interview with General Washington; principally, that he may have it to say, that he has seen and spoken to *the greatest man of this Age:* and, indeed, considering Mr. Durant's personal worth; his uncommon zeal for, and attachment to, the American cause; the losses he has sustained in attempting to assist her; and his extraordinary admiration of, and love to, the General's character and person; few men more richly merit this indulgence. If you still exist, and exist near the General's person (and I have not yet seen your name among the

lists of the slain or the disgraced), you can easily procure him this honor—and I trust you will.

We are now blessed with, and certified of, the glorious news of Burgoyne's surrender to the immortal GATES; another bright star in the Constellation of American Heroes: and we are momently expecting to hear, that General Washington has done something like the same by General Howe! But we yet tremble in suspense—and it is indeed a *painful one.* Probably before this letter goes, we shall hear more of the matter. Our general accounts are favorable: and while the *Chevaux de frize* are defended, we have no fears about Philadelphia. May this campaign decide the matter!

By the time this reaches you, you will be (if you are at all) in winter quarters; and perhaps may be at leisure to write me a half folio, of which Mr. Durant will take care to write me duplicates or triplicates, for fear of miscarriage.

A piece of mine, entitled "An Address to America, by a friend in a foreign government," has been sent to the Congress for publication (if approved). I know not yet its fate. It is, at least, an honestly designed and animating piece, but written incorrectly, and in a hurry. If you have seen it, pray give me your sentiments about it; but let it be on a loose paper inclosed in your letter; for the knowledge of my being the author must be a profound secret here.

My wishes are, that the God of Armies may defend and protect you, and cause you happily to survive, and to hand down to posterity the present important scenes. Numbers here esteem you, and would join me in declaring themselves, as I do,

Dear Hamilton,

Your ever affectionate friend and servant,

HUGH KNOX.

CLINTON TO HAMILTON.

POUGHKEEPSIE, 28th December, 1777.

DEAR SIR:

I was favored with the receipt of your letter of the 22d instant, some days since, and returned a short answer to it by the express who brought it; but as I have reason to believe you had left Peekskill before he got there, I conclude my letter has not been received. I have not a doubt but that there have been such unjust and dishonorable practices committed on the inhabitants as you mention; nor have I reason to believe they were without the knowledge of the commanding officer of the Department. Complaints have been exhibited to him of cattle, the property of the inhabitants of this State, living near Col. Robinson's, being drove off by parties of the continental troops, and sold at vendue in New England, without any account being rendered to the proprietors; and, if I am rightly informed, an officer with a party, took sundry articles from Robinson's, sent them off and sold them in like manner in Connecticut, and has not accounted with the States for the proceeds. Of this I informed General Putnam, and desired that an inquiry might be made into the conduct of the officer commanding the party, to which I was more particularly induced, as I found he had given an order on the Quarter-Master General for the payment of the teams employed in carrying off those effects; but I have reason to believe he has had no regard to my request. Of this I am fully convinced, that the soldiery claim as lawful prize every thing they take within the enemy's lines, though the property of our best friends, and whatever is taken beyond our advanced posts, by a generous construction, comes within the above predicament. On this principle the several articles taken at and near Robinson's were sold because the enemy's shipping were then in the river near that place; and on the same principle indiscriminate plunder might have taken place on both sides of the river as high up as the manor of Livingston. Little good can be expected of an army whose interest it is to suffer a

country to be abandoned to the enemy, thereby to justify plundering the inhabitants. Perhaps, and I don't know that it would be uncharitable to suppose, that it is this trade that makes some people so very fond of little expeditions.

I have long thought to ascertain these facts, and seek redress not only for the parties immediately injured, but the public; but my time has been so fully employed of late about other matters that I have been obliged to neglect it.

* * * * * * *

May I expect a line from you whenever you have leisure; be assured it will always be most kindly received, though perhaps not quite so punctually answered by

Your most obedient servant,

GEO. CLINTON.

My respects to Capt. Gibbs and young Livingston.

HAMILTON TO WILLIAM DUER, M. C.

HEAD-QUARTERS, 1778.

DEAR SIR:

I take the liberty to trouble you with a few hints on a matter of some importance. Baron Steuben, who will be the bearer of this, waits on Congress to have his office* arranged upon some decisive and permanent footing. It will not be amiss to be on your guard. The Baron is a gentleman for whom I have a particular esteem; and whose zeal, intelligence, and success, the consequence of both, entitle him to the greatest credit. But I am apprehensive, with all his good qualities, a fondness for power and importance, natural to every man, may lead him to wish for more extensive prerogatives in his department than it will be for the good of the service to grant. I should be sorry to excite any prejudice against him on this account: perhaps I may be mistaken in my conjecture. The caution I give will do

* Inspector-General of the Army.

no harm if I am: if I am not, it may be useful. In either case, the Baron deserves to be considered as a valuable man, and treated with all the deference which good policy will warrant.

On the first institution of this office, the General allowed him to exercise more ample powers than would be proper for a continuance. They were necessary in the commencement, to put things in a train with a degree of dispatch which the exigency of our affairs required: but it has been necessary to restrain them, even earlier than was intended. The novelty of the office excited questions about its boundaries; the extent of its operations alarmed the officers of every rank for their own rights. Their jealousies and discontents were rising fast to a height that threatened to overturn the whole plan. It became necessary to apply a remedy. The General has delineated the functions of the Inspectorship in general orders, a copy of which will be sent to Congress. The plan is good, and satisfactory to the army in general.

It may be improved, but it will be unsafe to deviate essentially from it. It is of course the General's intention, that whatever regulations are adopted by him, should undergo the revision, and receive the sanction, of Congress: but it is indispensable, in the present state of our army, that he should have the power, from time to time, to introduce and authorize the reformations necessary in our system. It is a work which must be done by occasional and gradual steps; and ought to be intrusted to a person on the spot, who is thoroughly acquainted with all our defects, and has judgment sufficient to adopt the progressive remedies they require. The plan established by Congress, on a report of the Board of War when Conway was appointed, appears to me exceptionable in many respects. It makes the Inspector independent of the Commander-in-chief; confers powers which would produce universal opposition in the army; and, by making the previous concurrence of the Board of War requisite to the introduction of every regulation which should be found necessary, opens such a continual source of delay as would defeat the usefulness of the institution. Let the Commander-in-chief introduce, and the legislature afterwards

ratify, or reject, as they shall think proper. Perhaps you will not differ much from me, when I suppose, that so far as relates to the Board of War, the former scheme was a *brat of faction*, and therefore ought to be renounced.

There is one thing which the Baron has much at heart, which, in good policy, he can by no means be indulged in: it is the power of enforcing that part of discipline which we understand by subordination, or an obedience to orders. This power can only be properly lodged with the Commander-in-chief, and would inflame the whole army if put into other hands. Each Captain is vested with it in his company; each Colonel in his regiment: each General in his particular command: and the Commander-in-chief in the whole.

When I began this letter, I did not intend to meddle with any other subject than the Inspectorship; but one just comes into my head which appears to me of no small importance. The goodness, or force, of an army, depends as much, perhaps more, on the composition of the corps which form it, as on its collective number. The composition is good or bad, not only according to the quality of the men, but in proportion to the completeness or incompleteness of a corps in respect to numbers. A regiment, for instance, with a full complement of officers, and fifty or sixty men, is not half so good as a company with the same number of men. A Colonel will look upon such a command as unworthy his ambition, and will neglect and despise it: a Captain would pride himself in it, and take all the pains in his power to bring it to perfection. In one case we shall see a total relaxation of discipline, and negligence of every thing that constitutes military excellence: in the other, there will be attention, energy, and every thing that can be wished. Opinion, whether well or ill-founded, is the governing principle of human affairs. A corps much below its establishment, comparing what it is with what it ought to be, loses all confidence in itself; and the whole army loses that confidence and emulation which are essential to success. These, and a thousand other things that will occur to you, make it evident, that the most important advantages attend the having complete corps, and proportional

disadvantages the reverse. Ten thousand men, distributed into twenty imperfect regiments, will not have the efficiency of the same number in half the number of regiments. The fact is, with respect to the American army, that the want of discipline, and other defects we labor under, are as much owing to the skeleton state of our regiments as to any other cause. What then?

Have we any prospect of filling our regiments? My opinion is, that we have nearly arrived to our *ne plus ultra*. If so, we ought to reduce the number of corps, and give them that substance and consistency which they want, by incorporating them together, so as to bring them near their establishment. By this measure the army would be infinitely improved; and the State would be saved the expense of maintaining a number of superfluous officers.

In the present condition of our regiments, they are incapable even of performing their common exercises without joining two or more together: an expedient reluctantly submitted to by those officers who see themselves made second in command of a battalion, instead of first, as their commission imports; which happens to every younger Colonel whose regiment is united with that of an elder.

What would be the inconveniencies, while the officers who remain in command, and who might be selected from the others on account of superior merit, would applaud themselves in the preference given them, and rejoice at a change which confers such additional consequence on themselves?

Those who should be excluded by the measure, would return home discontented, and make a noise, which would soon subside and be forgotten among matters of greater moment. To quiet them still more effectually, if it should be thought necessary, they might be put upon half-pay for a certain time.

If, on considering this matter, you should agree with me in sentiment, it were to be wished the scheme could be immediately adopted, while the arrangement now in hand is still unexecuted. If it is made, it will be rather inconvenient, immediately after, to unhinge and throw the whole system again afloat.

When you determined on your last arrangement, you did not know what success the different States might have had in draughting and recruiting. It would then have been improper to reduce the number of corps, as proposed. We have now seen their success: we have no prospect of seeing the regiments filled; we should reduce them.

Believe me to be,
With great esteem and regard,
Dear Sir, your obedient servant,
A. HAMILTON.

HAMILTON TO GEN. SULLIVAN.

HEAD-QUARTERS, 1778.

SIR:

His Excellency has received your two last favors to-day. In the first you hint the want of a reinforcement, but as the intention of your body is chiefly for observation and skirmishing, and not to make any serious stands, it is the less necessary it should be powerful in numbers. It will, however, depend upon circumstances how far it will be expedient to reinforce you; and as soon as any thing can be determined from them, you shall have whatever addition of strength you may stand in need of.

The information contained in your last, of the enemy's being encamped on the road leading from New Brunswick to Princeton, about the Third Mile Run, is not well founded. We have had parties and officers reconnoitring as far as the Mile Run, and there is no sign of an encampment. They seem to be taking their old position with their right at Amboy, their left at Brunswick; but how long they will remain so it is hard to tell. His Excellency desires you will engage some trusty person at South Amboy, on whom you can depend for faithful and early intelligence of the appearance of shipping in the river, or any preparations for a movement by water, that we may be in time prepared to counteract them.

I am, with regard, Sir,
Your most obedient servant,
A. HAMILTON.

JAY TO HAMILTON.

ALBANY, 8th May, 1778.

DEAR SIR:

An opinion of your benevolence leads me to address this letter to you. Accident has introduced me to Monsieur Lewis de Caleron. We happen to lodge in the same house. His modesty and decent manners made an impression upon me, and induced me to make some inquiries into his history and character. The gentlemen of this place say handsome things of him. He is the son of a Major General who fell last war at Ticonderoga. The family is still in Canada, and one of the most respectable in that country. He was sent to France when five years old, and there educated. He came out with some French troops to Martinico, and by their General, as well as Mr. Bingham, was recommended to Congress. They gave him a brevet for a Captain's commission. He served last campaign as a volunteer, first with General Furmoy, and afterwards with Colonel Morgan. To me he appears to have been neglected. It seems he did not descend to the adulation lately fashionable, and perhaps acceptable, in his department. While effrontery and arrogance, even in our virtuous and enlightened days, are giving rank and importance to men whom wisdom would have left in obscurity, I am persuaded you will be happy in an opportunity of exploring, as well as cherishing, modest merit. I think M. De Caleron is not without it, and under this impression I recommend him to your notice as a probationer.

Tell me in some future letter whether he deserves the favorable opinion I am inclined to entertain of him.

I am, dear Sir,

Very sincerely, and with much esteem,

Your obedient servant,

JOHN JAY.

Lt. Col. Hamilton.

WASHINGTON TO HAMILTON.

HEAD-QUARTERS, 4th June, 1778.

SIR:

Mr. Loring having been sent by Sir Henry Clinton to meet Mr. Boudinot, or any other person appointed by me for the purpose of effecting an exchange of prisoners. I have therefore to desire you (Mr. Boudinot being absent from camp) to hear any proposals Mr. Loring may have to offer on this subject; and to do definitively whatever may be necessary towards the execution of a general exchange of prisoners. And I hereby assure you that your proceedings in this instance will be ratified by me.

I am, Sir, your very humble servant,

G. WASHINGTON.

Lieut. Col. Hamilton.

HAMILTON TO THE MARQUIS DE LAFAYETTE.

25th June, 1778.

SIR:

We find, on our arrival here, that the intelligence received on the road is true. The enemy have all filed off from Allen Town, on the Monmouth road. Their rear is said to be a mile westward of Lawrence Taylor's tavern, six miles from Allen Town. General Maxwell is at Hyde's Town, about three miles from this place. General Dickinson is said to be on the enemy's right flank; but where, cannot be told. We can hear nothing certain of General Scott; but, from circumstances, he is probably at Allen Town. We shall, agreeably to your request, consider and appoint some proper place of rendezvous for the union of our force, which we shall communicate to Generals Maxwell and Scott, and to yourself. In the mean time, I would recommend to you to move toward this place as soon as the convenience of your men will permit. I am told that Colonel Morgan is on the enemy's right flank. We had a slight skirmish

with their rear this forenoon, at Robert Montgomery's, on the Monmouth road, leading from Allen Town. We shall see General Maxwell immediately, and you will hear from us again. Send this to the General after reading it.

I am your ob't serv't,

ALEX. HAMILTON.

DOCTOR STILE'S HOUSE, Cranbury Town, 9 o'clock.

We are just informed that General Scott passed by Hooper's tavern, five miles from Allen Town, this afternoon at five o'clock.

M. De Lafayette.

HAMILTON TO WASHINGTON.

ROBIN'S TAVERN, 8 miles from Allen Town, 12 o'clock, June 26, 1778.

SIR:

We have halted the troops at this place. The enemy, by our last reports, were four miles from this (that is, their rear), and had passed the road which turns off toward South Amboy, which determines their route toward Shrewsbury. Our reason for halting, is the extreme distress of the troops for want of provisions. General Wayne's detachment is almost starving, and seems both unwilling and unable to march further till they are supplied. If we do not receive an immediate supply, the whole purpose of our detachment must be frustrated.

This morning we missed doing any thing, from a deficiency of intelligence. On my arrival at Cranbury yester-evening, I proceeded, by desire of the Marquis, immediately to Hyde's Town and Allen Town, to take measures for co-operating with the different parts of the detachment, and to find what was doing to procure intelligence. I found every precaution was neglected; no horse was near the enemy, nor could be heard of till late in the morning: so that before we could send out parties and get the necessary information, they were in full march: and as they

have marched pretty expeditiously, we should not be able to come up with them during the march of the day, if we did not suffer the impediment we do, on the score of provisions. We are entirely at a loss where the army is, which is no inconsiderable check to our enterprise. If the army is wholly out of supporting distance, we risk the total loss of the detachment in making an attack.

If the army will countenance us, we may do something clever. We feel our personal honor, as well as the honor of the army, and the good of the service, interested; and are heartily desirous to attempt whatever the disposition of our men will second, and prudence authorize. It is evident the enemy wish to avoid, not to engage us.

Desertions, I imagine, have been pretty considerable to-day. I have seen eight or ten deserters, and have heard of many more. We have had some little skirmishing by detached parties: one attacked their rear-guard with a degree of success, killed a few, and took seven prisoners.

An officer is just come in, who informs that he left the enemy's rear five miles off, still in march, about half an hour ago. To ascertain still more fully their route, I have ordered a fresh party on their left, toward the head of their column. They have three brigades in rear of their baggage.

I am, with great respect and regard, Sir,
Your obedient servant,

A. HAMILTON.

His Excellency General Washington.

HAMILTON TO WASHINGTON.

June 28, 1778.

SIR:

The result of what I have seen and heard, concerning the enemy, is, that they have encamped with their van a little beyond Monmouth Court House, and their rear at Manalapan's

river, about seven miles from this place. Their march to-day has been very judiciously conducted;—their baggage in front, and their flying army in the rear, with a rear-guard of one thousand men about four hundred paces from the main body. To attack them in this situation, without being supported by the whole army, would be folly in the extreme. If it should be thought advisable to give the necessary support, the army can move to some position near the enemy's left flank, which would put them in a very awkward situation, with so respectable a body in their rear; and it would put it out of their power to turn either flank, should they be so disposed. Their left is strongly posted, and I am told their right also. By some accounts, one part of their army lies on the road leading from the Monmouth road to South Amboy. It is not improbable that South Amboy may be the object.

I had written thus far when your letter to the Marquis arrived. This puts the matter on a totally different footing. The detachment will march to-morrow morning at three o'clock to English Town.

I am, with great regard and esteem,
Your obedient servant,
A. HAMILTON.

His Excellency Gen. Washington.

HAMILTON TO WASHINGTON.

BLACK POINT, July 20, 1778.

SIR:

Inclosed I transmit your Excellency a letter from Count D'Estaing. He has had the river sounded, and finds he cannot enter. He will sail for Rhode Island to-morrow evening. In the mean time, he is making demonstrations to deceive the enemy, and beget an opinion that he intends to operate in this quarter. He would sail immediately, but he awaits the arrival, or to hear, of a frigate which carried Mr. Gerard to Delaware, and which he

appointed to meet him at Sandy Hook; so that he fears his sudden and unexpected departure, before she arrives, might cause her to be lost. He will not, however, wait longer than till to-morrow evening. We have agreed, that five cannon, fired briskly, shall be a signal of his arrival by day, and the same number, with five sky-rockets, a signal by night. In communicating this to General Sullivan, the Count wishes not a moment may be lost; and that he may be directed to have persons stationed on the coast, and intermediate expresses, to facilitate the communication between them. Pilots will be a material article. He begs every thing may be forwarded as much as possible; and as many troops collected as may be. He would be glad if a detachment could march from your army, or could be sent by water; for which purpose he would send covering ships, and some vessels he has taken, by way of transports; but he cannot think of losing so much time as seems necessary. If the water scheme could shorten it, it would be a happy circumstance. He recommends it to your attention; and that you would take measures, if the end can be better answered in this way, and meet him with information of the part he may have to act to execute the plan. I perceive he can, with difficulty, debark four thousand troops; but he will try to do it.

I hope your Excellency will excuse my not being myself the bearer of these particulars; the end may be answered by letter. Mr. Neville is anxious to get on. I just have heard of dispatches arrived from you. I don't know but they may contain something new which may make the Count to wish a good conveyance to return an answer. My stay till to-morrow morning may answer that end. I shall not delay coming forward.

I am, Sir, your most respectful
And obedient servant,
ALEX. HAMILTON.

His Excellency General Washington.

HAMILTON TO WASHINGTON.

NEWARK, July 28, 1778, one o'clock.

SIR:

I wrote to your Excellency the evening of the 20th, by Major Neville. I remained in the neighborhood of Black Point till the afternoon following. The Count had received his expected dispatches from Congress, and was to sail, as I mentioned before, the first fair wind. At Brunswick, yesterday, Mr. Caldwell joined me. He was immediately from the Point, and brought intelligence that the fleet got under way yesterday morning. The wind, unfortunately, has been much against them; which is so much the more to be regretted, as they are rather in want of water.

I need not suggest to your Excellency, that an essential part of the Rhode Island plan, is to take every possible measure to watch the enemy's motions, and to establish expresses from place to place, to give the Count instant information of any movement among their fleet. This will enable him to be in time to intercept them, should they attempt to evacuate New-York, while he is at Rhode Island; and will, in general, facilitate the intercourse and co-operation between him and your Excellency.

I have nothing new to communicate, beside what was sent by Major Neville, and what I now send. All the ideas interchanged between the Count and myself, were such as were familiar before I left Head Quarters. He was to go to Rhode Island, and, in conjunction with General Sullivan, endeavor to possess himself of the enemy's ships and troops there; if, on his arrival, he had good reason to think it could be effected without further assistance. If not, he will be glad of a reinforcement from you in the most expeditious manner possible. What manner you think will be most expeditious, you will adopt; and if his aid may be useful, he will afford it as soon as he is informed of it.

This being the case, my immediate presence at Head Quarters is the less necessary as to this business; and I hope your Excellency will indulge me, if I do not make all the dispatch back

which a case of emergency would require; though I do not mean to delay, more than a moderate attention to my frail constitution may make not improper. I have, &c.,

A. HAMILTON.

His Excellency Gen. Washington.

COL. LAURENS TO HAMILTON.

MY DEAR HAMILTON:

You have seen, and by this time considered, General Lee's infamous publication. I have collected some hints for an answer; but I do not think, either that I can rely upon my own knowledge of facts and style to answer him fully, or that it would be prudent to undertake it without counsel. An affair of this kind ought to be passed over in total silence, or answered in a masterly manner.

The ancient secretary is the Recueil of modern history and anecdotes, and will give them to us with candor, elegance, and perspicuity. The pen of Junius is in your hand; and I think you will, without difficulty, expose, in his defence, letters, and last production, such a tissue of falsehood and inconsistency, as will satisfy the world, and put him for ever to silence.

I think the affair will be definitively decided in Congress this day. He has found means to league himself with the *old faction*, and to gain a great many partisans.

Adieu, my dear boy. I shall set out for camp to-morrow.

JOHN LAURENS.

LAFAYETTE TO HAMILTON.

A YORCTOWN, 1er Septembre, 1778.

Ne suis-je pas bien malheureux, cher Colonel. On me pousse pour aller à Boston, on me chasse de Rhode Island, ils n'ont ni repos, ni patience que je ne sois parti, et le même jour que je m'absente est le seul ou j'aurais du, ou j'avais voulu être dans l'ile.

Le diable en veut dans ce moment à tous les français; heureusement que je viens de l'attraper, car a force de courir je suis arrivé à temps pour l'évacuation dont il voulait encore me priver. Le malheur de ne pas être à la première affaire m'a fait la peine la plus vive, et je ne m'en consolerai jamais, quoique ce soit bien loin d'être ma faute. Les deux retraites font honneur aux troupes et au général Sullivan, qui l'y est conduit parfaitement, elles en font rue aux Anglais et à leur généreaux qui n'ont montré ni activité, ni génie, du moins à ce qu'il me parait.

Le malheureux Mr. Tousard a eu le bras emporté au milieu d'une des actions les plus valeureuse qui ait été faite. C'est un homme aussi brave qu'il ait honnête. Je crains d'embarrasser le général en lui mandant ce que je voudrais qu'on fit pour lui; mais le commission de Major ne pouvait-elle pas se changer en celle de lieutenant Colonel; il avait fait un arrangement avant de partir *le grand arrangement de Mr. du Coudray*, ou en cas de la perte d'une membre, ils devaient avoir une pension de tant, cet arrangement-là qui comme vou-savez n'a pas été accepté, ne pouvait-il pas sa renouveller en sa faveur.

Il faut que vous me rendïez un grand service; c'est de me mander le plus de détails possibles sur la flotte de Lord Howe,— les moyens qui existent à New-York, etc. etc. Mr. D'Estaing a beaucoup de raisons de croire qu'il est arrivé quelques vaisseaux d'Angleterre, autres le Cornwall. Mandez-moi dans une longue lettre, Mon Cher Hamilton, ce que vous pensez sur ce qui a été fait, ce qui va se faire, et ce que pouvait être fait dans la suite. Votre dépèche me trouvera à Warren, petite ville près de la Providence, où je vais m'occuper a garder beaucoup de pays avec peu de troupes, et où sans repondre d'empêcher une descente des ennemis; je ferai le moins mal possible; si forces égales, je tacherai de les battre. On me flatte que le Général viendra ici lui-même; Dieu le veuille. Les affaires sur lesquelles je vous ai écrit mes complaintes, l'appaisent un peu, mais pour prendre Rhode Island il nous faut le Général Washington.

J'attends de vos nouvelles par Mons de Pontgibault et finerai simplement ma lettre en vous assurant de mon tendre attachement.

LAFAYETTE.

HAMILTON TO ———.

HEAD QUARTERS, Nov. 8, 1778.

DEAR SIR:

I have received your favor of the 4th, and shall with pleasure communicate the intelligence we have had at Head Quarters. On the morning of the third one hundred and eight sail of vessels sailed out of the Hook,—supposed, from the best calculations, to contain seven or eight thousand men. They first steered to the eastward, but soon after changed their course and bore S. E. with the wind at N. W. The general accounts from New-York speak of three distinct embarkations—one for the West Indies—another for Halifax—another for St. Augustine. One division, which seems to be best ascertained, contains ten or twelve British regiments, and most of the new levies, which probably went in the above-mentioned fleet.

This much is pretty certain, that the embarkation has continued since the departure of that fleet, which is a strong circumstance in favor of a general evacuation. All their vessels the least out of repair are drawn up to the different ship-yards, and their repairs are going on with all possible vigor. Whether the merchants are packing up or not, is a point still much *in dubio;* though we have several accounts that look like it, but they are not so precise and certain as could be wished. Several bales of goods have been seen on the wharves, marked for particular ships. A deserter, indeed, lately from the city, insists that he saw Coffin and Anderson packing up. This, if true, would be decisive, for this is a very considerable house particularly attached to the army. One of our spies, a trusty one too, writes the 31st of October that the principal part of the sick from the hospitals had embarked; but this stands almost wholly upon its own bottom. The capture of Jamaica seems to be a mere rumor. There are several others, respecting St. Kitts, Monserat, and Grenada. The two former are said to have been taken by surprise on a temporary absence of their guard-ships, but these stories were not improbably suggested by a late sudden and very considerable rise

in the prices of rum and molasses. The former being as high as fourteen or fifteen shillings per gallon. Large purchases have been made of these articles as sea stores for the troops, and the speculators in the city have been bidding against the Commissaries, which better accounts for the increased prices.

It is a question very undecided in my mind whether the enemy will evacuate or not. Reasoning *a priori*, the arguments seem to be strongest for it—from the exhausted state of the British resources—the naked condition of their dominions every where—and the possibility of a Spanish war. But on the other hand naval superiority must do a great deal in the business. This, I think, considering all things, appears clearly enough to be on the side of Britain. The sluggishness of Spain affords room to doubt her taking a decisive part. The preserving posts in these States will greatly distress our trade, and give security to the British West India trade. They will also cover the West Indies, and restrain any operations of ours against the British dominions on the continent. These considerations, and the depreciated state of our currency, will be strong inducements to keep New-York and Rhode Island, if not with a view to conquest, with a view to temporary advantages, and making better terms in a future negotiation.

From appearances, the great delay which attends the embarkation, the absolute tranquillity of the post at Rhode Island, where there is no kind of preparation for leaving it, and some other circumstances, seem to indicate an intention to remain. On the other hand, besides the general appearances I have already mentioned, their inattention to the petition of the refugees, and the not raising new works, are strong additional reasons for going away. I think it most probable, if they were determined to continue a garrison, that they would give most explicit assurances to their friends, in order to encourage their proposal, and engage them to aid in maintaining it. I think also they would contract their works, to be better proportioned to the number of the garrison, and of course more defensible, by throwing a chain of fortifications across the narrow part of the island.

Nothing has yet been decided, that we know of, with respect

to the sentences you mention. General Lee's case, by our last advices, was on the eve of a final decision. It seems he has made a strong party in Congress, and is very confident of having the sentence annulled. St. Clair's trial was ordered to be printed for the separate consideration of the members.

The depreciation of our currency really casts a gloom on our prospects, but my sentiments on this subject are rather peculiar. I think, bad as it is, it will continue to draw out the resources of the country a good while longer, and especially if the enemy make such detachments, of which there is hardly a doubt, as will oblige them to act on the defensive. This will make our public expenditures infinitely less—and will allow the States leisure to attend to the arrangements of their finances, as well as the country tranquillity to cultivate its resources.

Any letters that may come to Head Quarters for you will be carefully forwarded.

I am, with the most respectful attachment,

Dear Sir, your obed't servant,

A. HAMILTON.

HAMILTON TO BARON STEUBEN.

HEAD QUARTERS, 19th Dec., 1778.

I snatch a hasty moment, my dear Baron, to acknowledge the receipt of your obliging favor of the sixth. It came here while I was absent in an interview with some British Commissioners on the subject of an exchange of prisoners, and was not delivered to me till two days ago. I am sorry that your business does not seem to make so speedy a progress as we all wish; but I hope it will soon come to a satisfactory termination. I wish you to be in a situation to employ yourself usefully and agreeably, and to contribute to giving our military constitution that order and perfection it certainly wants. I have not time now to enter upon some matters which I shall take another opportunity to give you my sentiments concerning. I have read your letter to Lee with

pleasure. It was conceived in terms which the offence merited; and if he had had any feeling, must have been felt by him. Considering the pointedness and severity of your expressions, his answer was certainly a very modest one, and proved that he had not a violent appetite for so close a *tête-à-tête* as you seem disposed to insist upon. This evasion, if known to the world, would do him very little honor. I don't know but I shall be shortly at Philadelphia: if so, I shall have the honor of personally assuring you of the perfect respect and esteem with which I am,

My dear Baron,

Your most obed't servant,

ALEX. HAMILTON.

NARRATIVE OF AN AFFAIR OF HONOR BETWEEN GENERAL LEE AND COL. LAURENS.

24th December, 1778.

General Lee, attended by Major Edwards and Col. Laurens attended by Col. Hamilton, met agreeable to appointment on Wednesday afternoon half past three, in a wood, situate near the four mile stone on the Point-no-Point Road. Pistols having been the weapons previously fixed upon, and the combatants being provided with a brace each, it was asked in what manner they were to proceed. General Lee proposed to advance upon one another, and each fire at what time and distance he thought proper. Col. Laurens expressed his preference of this mode, and agreed to the proposal accordingly.

They approached each other within about five or six paces, and exchanged a shot almost at the same moment. As Col. Laurens was preparing for a second discharge, General Lee declared himself wounded. Col. Laurens, as if apprehending the wound to be more serious than it proved, advanced towards the General to offer his support. The same was done by Col. Hamilton and Major Edwards under a similar apprehension. General Lee then said the wound was inconsiderable; less than he had imagined

at the first stroke of the ball, and proposed to fire a second time. This was warmly opposed both by Col. Hamilton and Major Edwards, who declared it to be their opinion, that the affair should terminate as it then stood. But General Lee repeated his desire, that there should be a second discharge, and Col. Laurens agreed to the proposal. Col. Hamilton observed that, unless the General was influenced by motives of personal enmity, he did not think the affair ought to be pursued any further; but as Gen. Lee seemed to persist in desiring it, he was too tender of his friend's honor to persist in opposing it. The combat was then going to be renewed; but Major Edwards again declaring his opinion, that the affair ought to end where it was, Gen. Lee then expressed his confidence in the honor of the gentlemen concerned as seconds, and said he should be willing to comply with whatever they should coolly and deliberately determine. Col. Laurens consented to the same.

Col. Hamilton and Major Edwards withdrew, and conversing awhile on the subject, still concurred fully in the opinion, that for the most urgent reasons, the affair should terminate as it was then circumstanced. This decision was communicated to the parties and agreed to by them, upon which they immediately returned to town; General Lee slightly wounded in the right side.

During the interview a conversation to the following purport passed between General Lee and Col. Laurens. On Col. Hamilton's intimating the idea of personal enmity, as before mentioned —Gen. Lee declared he had none, and had only met Col. Laurens, to defend his own honor—that Mr. Laurens best knew whether there was any on his part. Col. Laurens replied, that General Lee was acquainted with the motives that had brought him there, which were, that he had been informed from what he thought good authority, that Gen. Lee had spoken of General Washington in the grossest and most opprobrious terms of personal abuse, which he, Col. Laurens, thought himself bound to resent, as well on account of the relation he bore to General Washington, as from motives of personal friendship and respect for his character. General Lee acknowledged that he had given his opinion against General Washington's military character to

his particular friends, and might perhaps do it again. He said every man had a right to give his sentiments freely of military characters, and that he did not think himself personally accountable to Col. Laurens for what he had done in that respect. But he said he never had spoken of General Washington in the terms mentioned, which he could not have done; as well because he had always esteemed General Washington as a man, as because such abuse would be incompatible with the character he would ever wish to sustain as a gentleman.

Upon the whole, we think it a piece of justice to the two gentlemen to declare, that after they met, their conduct was strongly marked with all the politeness, generosity, coolness and firmness, that ought to characterize a transaction of this nature.

ALEXANDER HAMILTON.
EV. EDWARDS.

PHILADELPHIA, December 24th, 1778.

DUPLESSIS TO HAMILTON.

11 Janvier, 1779.

Je nái point reçu, mon cher Hamilton, les papiérs que vous deviez m'envoyer avec Les Signes en chiffres.

Si vons désirez ce dont nous étiens convenu, lorsque jè partis du quartiér General, remettez le tout à M. De la Colombe, qui dans deux mois part pour France. Je vous promets beaucoup de vérite et jeu d' esprit dans la narration.

Dans peu de minutes, nous voguerous; presentez mon respect à son Excellence, et mes amitiés à toute votre famille. Souvenez vous de tout ce que je vous ai dit à mon départ et soyez homme de parôle.

Adieu, soyez sur que vous avez en moi un bon et vrai ami; n'en doutez point, et vous rendrez justice.

LE CHEVALIER DUPLESSIS.

Col. Hamilton,
Aid-de-Camp of
His Excellency General Washington,
Head Quarters.

HAMILTON TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.

HEAD QUARTERS, March 14, 1779.

DEAR SIR:

Colonel Laurens, who will have the honor of delivering you this letter, is on his way to South Carolina, on a project which I think, in the present situation of affairs there, is a very good one, and deserves every kind of support and encouragement. This is, to raise two, three, or four battalions of negroes, with the assistance of the government of that State, by contributions from the owners, in proportion to the number they possess. If you should think proper to enter upon the subject with him, he will give you a detail of his plan. He wishes to have it recommended by Congress to the State; and, as an inducement, that they would engage to take their battalions into Continental pay.

It appears to me, that an expedient of this kind, in the present state of Southern affairs, is the most rational that can be adopted, and promises very important advantages. Indeed, I hardly see how a sufficient force can be collected in that quarter without it: and the enemy's operations there are growing infinitely serious and formidable. I have not the least doubt, that the negroes will make very excellent soldiers, with proper management: and I will venture to pronounce, that they cannot be put in better hands than those of Mr. Laurens. He has all the zeal, intelligence, enterprise, and every other qualification, requisite to succeed in such an undertaking. It is a maxim with some great military judges, that, with sensible officers, soldiers can hardly be too stupid: and, on this principle, it is thought that the Russians would make the best soldiers in the world, if they were under other officers than their own. The King of Prussia is among the number who maintains this doctrine, and has a very emphatic saying on the occasion, which I do not exactly recollect. I mention this because I have frequently heard it objected to the scheme of embodying negroes, that they are too stupid to make soldiers. This is so far from appearing to me a valid objection, that I think their want of cultivation (for

their natural faculties are as good as ours), joined to that habit of subordination which they acquire from a life of servitude, will enable them sooner to become soldiers than our white inhabitants. Let officers be men of sense and sentiment; and the nearer the soldiers approach to machines, perhaps the better.

I foresee that this project will have to combat much opposition from prejudice and self-interest. The contempt we have been taught to entertain for the blacks, makes us fancy many things that are founded neither in reason nor experience; and an unwillingness to part with property of so valuable a kind, will furnish a thousand arguments to show the impracticability, or pernicious tendency, of a scheme which requires such sacrifices. But it should be considered, that if we do not make use of them in this way, the enemy probably will; and that the best way to counteract the temptations they will hold out, will be, to offer them ourselves. An essential part of the plan is, to give them their freedom with their swords. This will secure their fidelity, animate their courage, and, I believe, will have a good influence upon those who remain, by opening a door to their emancipation. This circumstance, I confess, has no small weight in inducing me to wish the success of the project; for the dictates of humanity, and true policy, equally interest me in favor of this unfortunate class of men.

While I am on the subject of southern affairs, you will excuse the liberty I take in saying, that I do not think measures sufficiently vigorous are pursuing for our defence in that quarter. Except the few regular troops of South Carolina, we seem to be relying wholly on the militia of that and the two neighboring States. These will soon grow impatient of service, and leave our affairs in a miserable situation. No considerable force can be uniformly kept up by militia; to say nothing of the many obvious and well-known inconveniences that attend this kind of troops. I would beg leave to suggest, Sir, that no time ought to be lost in making a draught of militia to serve a twelvemonth, from the States of North and South Carolina and Virginia. But South Carolina, being very weak in her population of whites, may be excused from the draught, on condition of furnishing the black

battalions. The two others may furnish about three thousand five hundred men, and be exempted, on that account, from sending any succors to this army. The States to the northward of Virginia, will be fully able to give competent supplies to the army here; and it will require all the force and exertions of the three States I have mentioned, to withstand the storm which has arisen, and is increasing in the South.

The troops draughted, must be thrown into battalions, and officered in the best possible manner. The supernumerary officers may be made use of as far as they will go. If arms are wanted for their troops, and no better way of supplying them is to be found, we should endeavor to levy a contribution of arms upon the militia at large. Extraordinary exigencies demand extraordinary means. I fear this southern business will become a very *grave* one.

With the truest respect and esteem,
I am, Sir, your most obedient servant,
ALEX. HAMILTON.

His Excell'y John Jay,
President of Congress.

HAMILTON TO BARON STEUBEN.

May 26, 1779.

The General, on reflection, is a little uneasy about the route you intend to take. He thinks it not quite safe, as the enemy have troops on Long Island and may easily throw a party across the Sound, so that you would be in danger of having your agreeable dreams interrupted, if you should sleep any where from New Haven to Fairfield.

It is probable, one of the Count's motives in coming this way may be to see the ruins of those places; and if he could do it without risk, it would be desirable; but he would not probably

be at his ease, if in consequence of it, he should be obliged to attend the levee of Sir Henry Clinton. This may happen if he continues his intention, unless very good precautions are taken to avoid the danger. The General recommends it to you, at least to be very vigilant upon your post, and not to suffer yourself to be surprised. You will be so good as to let us have timely notice of your approach, as we shall, at least, meet you at Fishkill Landing, with boats to take you down to Head Quarters.

I have the honor to be,

Your affectionate and respectful friend,

A. HAMILTON.

HAMILTON TO OTHO H. WILLIAMS.

11th June, 1779.

DEAR WILLIAMS:

The General sends you four fresh horsemen to enable you to transmit him intelligence. The General will take the road you marched to your quarters.

Mind your eye, my dear boy, and if you have an opportunity, fight hard.

Your friend and servant,

A. HAMILTON.

HAMILTON TO MAJOR LEE, OR IN HIS ABSENCE, CAPT. McLANE.

July, 1779.

SIR:

There is an encampment of the enemy, or a demonstration of one, which appears on the other side of the river, considerably on this side of Tarry Town. You will be pleased in consequence to have patrols kept from this till morning, seven or eight miles down along the shore and on the roads leading to this

place on our right. This might be a critical night, and demands the greatest vigilance.

I am, Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

A. HAMILTON,
Aid-de-Camp.

HENRY LAURENS TO HAMILTON.

PHILADELPHIA, 29th July, 1779.

DEAR SIR:

In addition to the lines which I troubled you with the day before yesterday by Colonel, or I should say Doctor McHenry; he is an honest man with either, or without any title, permit me to inform you. I presented to Congress this morning, Colonel Fleury's earnest request for the flag which he had the glory of lowering at Stony Point, but there was not a single voice heard in second to my motion. In truth, I had spoken to several of the members on the subject before the meeting of Congress; these discovered not only no inclination, but rather an aversion to parting with so high a testimony of a great and brilliant victory; nevertheless, I determined to fulfil my promise; you see the success. Fancy often fills up the chasms made by disappointments of this kind; many of the most celebrated Italian originals in the cabinets of curious fanciful men in England, are good copies. Suppose in the present instance the Colonel should order an accurate likeness of the first flag to be made, and content himself with that, or that by a very trifling practice of ambidexterity, he should exchange the copy for the original; or suppose he should take a much better and less exceptionable method for accomplishing his wishes, that he should arm himself with one of Dunlap's Packets, in which his gallant behavior and the particular feat of cutting the halliards, stand upon record by authority of Congress; this might be kept in the tin case with commissions and testimonials, answer every purpose of display,

and save the trouble and expense of lugging sixty or eighty yards of bunting round the Globe.

I have executed my commission; have added my best consolatory advice to a disappointed client, and trust the Colonel will do me the justice to assure himself, my own opinion on the propriety of his suit was not disclosed fully or partially to any body before I had received a modest denial by a profound silence.

Nothing new from South Carolina, excepting a delegate, who left Charleston one day before the date of our late letters.

I have the honor to be,
With great esteem and respect,
Dear Sir,
Your ob't and humble serv't,
HENRY LAURENS.

Col. A. Hamilton, Head Quarters, North River.

COLONEL FLEURY TO HAMILTON.

L'INFANTERY CAMP, 18th August, 1779.

DEAR COLONEL:

The officers of the two A Battalions of l'Infantery, which I actually command, have applied to me for ceasing to run over those craggy mountains barefooted, and beg that I would write to head quarters to have an order from his Excellency to get one pair of shoes for each; the shoes they hint to are at New Windsor, and their intention is to pay for.

Do not be so greedy for shoes as for my blanket, and think that the most urgent necessity has determined their application; they are quite barefooted.

I am very respectfully, Sir,
Your most obedient servant,
L. FLEURY.

N. B. As his Excellency could form a very advantageous idea of our being lucky in shoes by the appearance of the

officers who dined to-day at head quarters, and were not quite without, I beg you would observe to him, if necessary, that each company had furnished a shoe for their dressing.

Camp l'Infantery, 19th August, 1779.

Si vous savez un mot de M. De La Luzerne dites le moi.

HAMILTON TO JAMES DUANE.

August 28th, 1779.

DEAR SIR:

I with pleasure snatch a moment, agreeable to your request, to inform you of the events which have taken place since you left us. A York paper of the 24th, announces the arrival of the Russell of 74, which parted three days before from Arbuthnot's fleet, which was of course momently expected. Subsequent intelligence gives us the arrival of the whole fleet. This comes through different channels, and is believed; but we have no particulars. *Wayne is still safe.*

Northern news says that Sir George Collier, having appeared in Penobscot River, put our grand fleet to the rout. They were run ashore, abandoned, and burnt; the troops and seamen safe. Colonel Jackson's regiment, which had been sent as a reinforcement, landed at Portsmouth. This account comes in a letter from General Gates to Colonel Hay. To counterbalance the bad in a degree, he tells me three of our Continental frigates were arrived at Boston with six sail out of ten of the Jamaica fleet which had fallen into their hands, containing 5000 hdds. of rum and sugar.

I have the honor to be,
Very faithfully and affectionately,
Your most obedient servant,
A. HAMILTON.

Hon. Mr. Duane.

BARON STEUBEN TO HAMILTON.

August 30th, 1779.

Mr. De la Luzerne desires me to join him on his route, to accompany him to head quarters. I shall depart on Tuesday morning for Providence, where I may require three days to review the regiments; after which I shall return immediately to Hartford to join the Minister.

I promised to give you a picture of his new Excellency. He is about thirty-six years of age, though he appears younger. In the last war he was aid-de-camp to Marshal Broglio. He appears to be a man of solid sense, and less presumptuous than the people of quality in that country usually are. His manners are prepossessing; and they would be more so if he could speak English. His character appears to me to be good; and he is less reserved than European Ministers usually are. His personal appearance will not displease the ladies of Philadelphia. He is a young chevalier of Malta, who is not so much imbrowned by his crusades, but that the American beauties will take pains to teach him English in a short time. His Secretary, Mr. Marbois, is a counsellor of Parliament, from Metz in Lorraine—speaks good English; and is a man who shows much information and judgment.

STEUBEN.

Col. Hamilton.

DUANE TO HAMILTON.

Kingston, 4th Sept., 1779.

DEAR SIR:

I have spent some days at this place with our Legislature, and have been happy in finding their zeal for the common cause undiminished. Every thing which can be asked for the army, they will most cheerfully grant, and Col. Wadsworth is gone away perfectly satisfied. It is a circumstance to their honor that

amidst all their wants and distresses—flour and carriage have been supplied at 25 per cent. less than in any part of the Continent: and that by a law of the State. If it had produced the effect to be expected from so spirited an example, it must have had a powerful influence on our money: but it is to be lamented that we stood *single*, and that our citizens are impoverished by a sacrifice of a fourth of their produce and labor to little purpose.

Be kind enough to forward the inclosed to Lt. Col. Washington; and to present my respectful compliments to his Excellency the Commander-in-Chief and the family; and believe me to be, with real esteem and affection,

Dear Col.,

Your most ob't servant,

JAMES DUANE.

Col. Hamilton.

HAMILTON TO BARON STEUBEN.

Sept., 1779.

DEAR BARON:

I am at this moment honored with your letter of the 30th ultimo, and have communicated that part of it which concerns M. De la Luzerne to the General; agreeably to which we shall take our measures on the reception of this private public gentleman. We had prepared a party of Cavalry to receive him at Fishkill, on the supposition that he would set out with an escort from Boston; but we have now sent orders to the party immediately to take the route you mention to Hartford, and there place themselves under your orders.

The General requests you will make his respectful compliments to your Chevalier, and gives you carte blanche to say every handsome thing you think proper in his name, of the pleasure which this visit will give him. I have no doubt that your portrait, which appears to be executed en maitre, will be found a just representation of the original; and if he is as happy as his predecessor in gaining the esteem and confidence of the *men of*

this country, with so many talents to conciliate the leaders, his ministry will not be unsuccessful. I augur well for him. Gen. Washington proposes to meet him as a private gentleman at Fishkill.

A. HAMILTON.

HAMILTON TO DUANE.

Sept. 7, 1779.

MY DEAR SIR:

I this day received your letter of the 4th, with one inclosed for Col. Washington, which was immediately forwarded. You do not mention the receipt of a line from me which I wrote several days since, giving you an account of Arbuthnot's arrival.

The current of our intelligence makes the reinforcement with him amount to about three thousand, mostly recruits and in bad health; it is said some preparations are making for an expedition, and there are various conjectures about the object; some point to the Southward; perhaps the true destination is the West Indies. But, I confess, I should not be surprised, if the enemy should make a further and vigorous attempt to gain possession of two or three of the Southern States. If their affairs are so desperate with respect to alliance as we are told, the object of the war on their side, from conquest must necessarily change to pacification. The acquisition of two or three of the Southern States would be a handsome counterpoise to their losses in the Islands, and would enable them to negotiate with the more credit and success the ensuing winter.

I am happy to have it in my power to gratify your curiosity about the Western expedition with the inclosed agreeable account. It is the substance of a letter from General Sullivan of the 30th, extracted at Col. Hay's request, for Mr. Lowdon's paper. The facts are all true, though you will perceive I have given it a few of the usual embellishments of a newspaper paragraph. I have not specified the number of Gen Sullivan's wounded; they

amount to thirty-nine, among which are Major Titcomb and two other officers. This is a pleasing and I hope decisive event.

In haste, but with the greatest esteem and regard,

I have the honor to be your most

Obed't servant,

ALEX. HAMILTON.

COL. LEE TO HAMILTON.

Sept. 10, 1779.

MY DEAR SIR:

I wish you would send me a copy of General Washington's letter of instructions to me—a copy of General Orders on the subject of the 19th and the sentence of the Court and trial. The emissaries from the Virginia party have been industrious to injure my military character.

I am, dear Sir,

Yours sincerely,

HENRY LEE.

DUANE TO HAMILTON.

Sept. 10, 1779.

DEAR SIR:

Accept my thanks for your favor of the 28th of August, and your obliging assurances that you will comply with my request. Unless my anxiety in the events of the campaign had been very great, I should not have been so unreasonable as to impose this burthen on any of my much respected friends at head quarters; well knowing that they, of all others, have the least leisure. I find the British reinforcement is arrived. To me it brings no terror, as I think we have the strongest evidence that it was not originally intended to exceed four thousand men, and these raw recruits. You say Wayne is still safe. Let him keep a sharp look out; for I still hold the opinion, that Sir Henry Clinton is

bound in honor to chastise him, for one of the most daring and insolent assaults that is to be found in the records of chivalry; an achievement so brilliant in itself—so romantic in the scale of British admiration—that none but a hero, inspired by the fortitude, instructed by the wisdom, and guided by the planet of Washington, could, by the exploit at Paulus Hook, have furnished materials in the page of history to give it a parallel. * * You see from this how much I am at my ease.

To know the value of domestic enjoyment, next to head quarters, I recommend the chair at the Board of Treasury, for ten months of a session, in which both our friends and foes are waging a successful war against the public credit.

Present my affectionate regard to His Excellency, and the family, and believe me, with every friendly sentiment,

Your affectionate and devoted servant,

JAMES DUANE.

HAMILTON TO DUANE.

WEST POINT, Sept. 14, 1779.

MY DEAR SIR:

I do not recollect whether I said any thing in my last about the strength of the reinforcement with Arbuthnot. All the accounts agree that it does not exceed 3000, mostly recruits, and in very bad health; it is said more than a thousand died on the passage, and the greater part of the remainder are journeying fast to the other world. Disease prevails also in the other parts of the army and among the inhabitants, more than has been known at any time, since the enemy has been in possession of the city. They have been of late making extensive preparations for embarking troops, and we have just received advice, that two German and one British regiment sailed from New-York on the 11th, under convoy of a Sixty-four. The rumors about the destination are various. The West Indies, Georgia, Canada, are all talked of, but the first with most confidence, and is no doubt

most probable; our intelligence announces a continuance of the embarkation.

A vessel lately arrived at Boston from the Cape, reports that she sailed from that place in company with Count D'Estaing, with twenty-five sail of the line, and some transports, containing 6000 troops taken in at the Cape, and bound first for Georgia and afterward farther Northward. She parted with the fleet in latitude 25, longitude 74. Two other vessels, arived at some place in Connecticut, pretend that they parted with a French fleet of men of war, and transports, in the latitude of Bermuda, steering for this coast. These concurrent accounts are not entirely unworthy of attention, though I am not disposed to give them entire credit.

The reduction of the enemy's fleets and armies in this country, would be the surest method to effect the complete conquest of the Islands; and it would be one of the most fatal strokes Great Britain could receive. The stamina of their Military Establishment are in this country. The ruin of this, and the capture of their seamen and ships, would be an irrecoverable loss. The West Indies would scarcely have any further prospect of succor, and would be obliged to submit to the power of France almost without resistance; which might then operate at leisure, aided by ample supplies from this continent, which I believe are the principal thing wanting.

These reasons may have induced the Count to make us a visit, during the season of inactivity in the West Indies; or if he does not come himself, if by forming a junction with the Spanish fleet, he can make a detachment this way, and still maintain a superority for operation in that quarter, this perhaps will make the event more probable, than on the former supposition. I have now given you all the intelligence we have, and have mixed certainties, rumors, and conjectures. You will extract and believe as much as you think proper. I shall only add, that I am with the most perfect esteem and attachment,

Dear Sir,

Your most obed't serv't,

A. HAMILTON.

The General and family charge me to present their most affectionate respects. We are to receive the new Minister to-morrow morning.

DUANE TO HAMILTON.

MANOR OF LIVINGSTON, 16th September, 1779.

MY DEAR COL.:

I have had no earlier opportunity to acknowledge the receipt of your very agreeable favor of the 7th instant. To yours of the —— I transmitted an answer by the post.

I perfectly agree in opinion with you what the enemy ought in good feeling to attempt; but as they uniformly contravene their best interests, and pursue measures which can produce the least possible advantage, I conclude they will not persevere in the system of attacking us in our weakest side—the Southern States. They may too, by this time, have some reason for declining what a more enterprising people would hazard at any event. I think I intimated to you that I should not be surprised if Count D'Estaing paid a visit to our coast this fall. Reports prevail which announce his approach. In that case they will be as safe in New-York as at Savannah or Charleston; and it is no slander to say, that the *safety* of their army has all along been their first object. I have many reasons to be anxious for the expedition against the Six Nations. No less than the safety of our Northern and Western frontiers depends upon its success; to say nothing of the vast national advantages which will be derived from the reduction of these perfidious savages. By the way, what will the world think of our spirit and our resources, when at the very instant our enemies, foreign and domestic, pronounced our immediate ruin from the embarrassment of our finances, and a series of heavy calamities under which they affirmed we were expiring, they see their grand army cooped up in a garrison; their forts taken from them by unparalleled bravery; the country of their Indian allies ravaged and

destroyed without a single effort for their protection; and a capital naval armament equipped by a single State, which it required misconduct *perhaps*, on our part, and *certainly* the most hazardous efforts on theirs, to defeat! I wait with great impatience for further intelligence from General Sullivan's army. I am not sufficiently acquainted with the country to form a clear idea of their intended route; but if they visit the Senecas effectually, I suppose we soon shall hear from them at Conodeseraga, the chief Seneca town, where our State, so long ago as 1732, made a large purchase for a settlement, to keep them in, but which was not prosecuted on account of the turbulent and faithless temper of the Senecas, and the want of vigor in our own Government.

I must close, or lose the opportunity by a sloop passing to New Windsor. Be so good as to pay my most respectful compliments to His Excellency, the family, Generals McDougal, Greene and Knox, and *if he is still safe*, to G. Wayne; and believe me to be with great regard, and a disposition to do you every possible service,

Your most obedient servant,

JAS. DUANE.

Col. Hamilton.

DUANE TO HAMILTON.

MANOR LIVINGSTON, 23d September, 1779.

MY DEAR SIR:

I am obliged much by your kind attention to me. The condition of our enemies, instead of being formidable, as they predicted, seems daily to become more feeble; and instead of those vigorous and decisive operations, which could alone have revived their declining cause, and kept up the spirits of their infatuated adherents, we see nothing but languor, discontent, and disgust in their army, their fields, and their councils. Their king alone, as if literally hardened by a judicial blindness, persists in his obstinate folly, and courts the destruction of the

British Empire. If, in addition to all his other wants, distresses, and misfortunes, sickness has taken a deep root among his troops, and his partisans; a decisive period must in all probability be speedily put to the mad career.

Count d'Estaing seems to have the ball at his feet. His command of the ocean must be indisputable when he is joined by the Spanish squadron lately at Havana. He may divide his force, subdue the West India Islands, and assist us in expelling or captivating the remnant of our enemies on this continent. I have, however, some distrust of the Count's *planet*. His former ill luck on our coast has led me to think that he is no *Felix*. I conclude not much from the advantages he acquired over Biron; for that man is marked for the child of misfortune, and I dare say if his nativity was cast, it would appear that his star foreboded decapitation and disgrace. Believe me, I never meddled with the black art, nor am I over superstitious, and yet I discern that I am not altogether free from a prejudice which was very remarkable in the greatest nation of antiquity. Hence it is that I so anxiously look for the fortunate completion of our western expedition; even when a train of favorable events renders it so highly probable.

Be so good as to present my affectionate and respectful compliments to the General and all the family; and believe that I shall be happy in every opportunity to convince you that I am sincerely,

Your friend and
Most obedient servant,
JAS. DUANE.

P. S. How do you like the new Minister of France? I have a letter from G. Schuyler. In the course of a week I expect him here, and shall probably accompany him on a visit to the General and our friends at head quarters.

HAMILTON TO DUANE.

October 1, 1779.

I am much obliged to you, my dear sir, for your two letters of the 16th and 23d. In haste I snatch up my pen by an express going off to the Governor, to give you the news as it runs. The most important and best authenticated is, that Count D'Estaing was arrived on the coast of Georgia. The tale runs thus. We are in possession of a Charleston paper of the 6th of September, which mentions that the Viscount de Fontagnes had arrived at that place, sent by the Count to announce his approach. Mr. Mitchel, who transmits the paper, adds,—that by the express which brought it, Mr. Gerard had received dispatches from the Count, informing him of his intention to attack the enemy in Georgia on the 9th; that in consequence of this intelligence Mr. Gerard had postponed his voyage a few days to be the bearer of the event. This, I hope, puts a period to the danger of the Southern States, for which I could not help having strong apprehensions, notwithstanding the presumption drawn from the enemies' past folly against their pursuing any plan favorable to their interest. I acknowledge the force of the argument, but I was afraid they might for once blunder upon the right way. The departure of Cornwallis on the 25th, with the Grenadiers, Light Infantry, and one British regiment, had increased my horrors on this subject. The nature of this corps pointed to a temporary service for some important coup de main. Charleston presented itself as the only object. They would hardly separate the flower of their troops for any remote and permanent station. They are continuing their embarkation. The accounts we have of the particular corps carry them to between five and six thousand. I send you a Boston paper of the 23d, containing some interesting European advices.

Your most respectful and affectionate servant,

ALEX. HAMILTON.

P. S. The General is happy in the hopes you give him of a

speedy visit from General Schuyler and yourself, and orders me to present his respects to both. The family join in every sentiment of perfect esteem.

WASHINGTON TO COUNT D'ESTAING.

HEAD QUARTERS, WEST POINT, October 7th, 1779.

SIR:

Since my letter to your Excellency on the 4th instant, I have had the honor of a visit from his Excellency, Monsieur Gerard. In the conversation we had relative to a co-operation with the fleet and troops under your command, he expressed his doubts of its being possible for you to continue such a length of time as may be essential to the success of the undertaking, and which alone could justify me in going into those extensive preparations absolutely necessary on our part. I have therefore appointed Brigadier General Du Portail and Colonel Hamilton to wait upon your Excellency as speedily as possible, and explain to you fully my ideas of the proposed co-operation—the means we shall be able to employ—the obstacles we shall have to encounter on our side—the plans which it may be proper to pursue, and the measures which are taking and may be taken by the enemy to counteract them. This will enable your Excellency to determine what you can with propriety undertake. I shall only add, that if your Excellency will engage to co-operate with your whole naval and land force against the enemy's fleet and army at New-York, till the winter is so far advanced that the ice will make it impracticable to remain with your fleet any longer in port, I will bring twenty-five thousand effective men into the field, and will exert all the resources of the country in a vigorous and decided co-operation. Without this assurance on the part of your Excellency, it would be inconsistent with my duty to the public and to the common cause, to incur the expense and hazard which would be inseparable from the enterprise, and the more disagreeable consequences which would

attend a failure. I flatter myself your Excellency will be fully sensible of the weight of the reasons, on which this declaration is founded, and will approve the frankness with which it is made, and with which I have instructed General Du Portail and Colonel Hamilton to disclose to you every circumstance, and every consideration with which it is necessary you should be acquainted. If your determination should be in favor of the enterprise, I request you will honor me with a line in answer to this letter, expressive of your ultimate intentions, and that you will communicate to the gentlemen who now wait upon you, the previous measures you propose to pursue, and your sentiments of the most eligible plan of co-operation. I shall act in consequence, till the period arrives for concerting a final and more determinate plan.

I would now observe to your Excellency, that you may repose the most implicit confidence in General Du Portail and Colonel Hamilton, and accordingly I recommend them to your kind civilities and attention. And, having done this, I have only to renew the assurances of that sincere attachment and perfect respect with which I have the honor to be

Your Excellency's

Most obedient servant,

G. WASHINGTON.

HENRY LEE TO HAMILTON.

MANDLOPEN, October 15th, 1779.

DEAR SIR:

I have your letters of the 9th and 13th October. The pilots have orders one half to proceed to Lewistown, there to wait on you.

The route I cannot yet determine, as I am not sufficiently acquainted. They will be sent the shortest, and every assistance given them to expedite their arrival.

Should you leave the Capes before they get there, it would

be necessary to dispatch a courier to cross at Dover and pursue the Jersey route with directions for them. Yourself or courier must meet them.

My intelligence corresponds exactly with the information obtained from Captain Monroe and transmitted you from head quarters.

Rhode Island was not evacuated when my last accounts arrived, but will be on the Count's appearance. Transports are ready there for the purpose.

Sandy Hook, the Narrows, and Governor's Island are strongly fortified. Be assured of my execution of your wishes, and that

I am your friend and servant,

HENRY LEE.

Col. Hamilton.

WASHINGTON TO HAMILTON AND DU PORTAIL.

Head Quarters, West Point, Oct. 18, 1779.

GENTLEMEN:

I have been favored with Colonel Hamilton's letter, mentioning your arrival early on the 11th, at Philadelphia, and your being about to set off for Lewistown on the morning on which it was written.

I have attentively considered the object to which you more particularly refer, and am now to authorize you (provided the Count will not determine on a co-operation to the full extent of my instructions), to engage the whole force described in my letters to him, comprehending the Continental troops and militia, in such an enterprise against the enemy's shipping, as the Count and you may agree to undertake. In a word, I will aid him in every plan of operations against the enemy at New-York, or Rhode Island, in the most effectual manner that our strength and resources will admit. He has nothing more to do, therefore, than to propose his own plan, if time will not admit him to accede to

ours; weighing thoroughly, consequences of expense and disappointment.

Inclosed is some intelligence received from Elizabethtown since your departure. You will observe the preparations of the enemy for throwing every possible obstruction in the Count's passage.

A chain of alarm ships are stationed in the Sound, to communicate the first approach of the Count's fleet to the garrison at Rhode Island. This they can propagate in a few minutes by signal guns. In a letter from General Gates of the 13th instant, he advises me of the arrival of the fleet, which some time ago sailed from New-York. It amounts to fifty-six sail, and appeared to be only in a set of ballast. This was confirmed by one of the vessels which fell into our hands for a few hours. The opinion is, that it is designed to take off the garrison.

General Gates makes the marine force at Newport, one fifty, and a thirty-two gun frigate. The Refugee and Wood fleet, about thirty-seven sail, mostly armed, at the head of which is the Restoration, late the Oliver Cromwell, of twenty-two guns. One frigate is also taken notice of in the fleet from New-York.

Should the operations against New-York, in either case, be undertaken, it will be of the utmost consequence to block up the garrison at Rhode Island. You will consider the propriety of suggesting to the Count, the detaching of a superior sea force for this purpose, previous to his approaching the Hook. For, should the measure be deferred till his arrival there, it may not then be possible to prevent their junction with the army at New-York, as the notice can be so very suddenly transmitted by means of the signals which they have established.

Every proper attention has been given to preparing the necessary number of fascines, and suchother materials as may be requisite in this quarter. Fascines, gabions, etc., are also held in readiness at Providence in case of an operation against Newport. I had thought of the fire ships, and have taken order in the matter. . I do not, however, choose to go to the great expense they must run us into, till something is decided with His Excellency

Count D'Estaing; but every thing relative shall be provided, so as to occasion no delay when such matters become necessary.

I am, Gentlemen,
Your most obedient servant,
G. WASHINGTON.

Brigadier-General Du Portail.
Lieutenant-Colonel Hamilton.

WASHINGTON TO HAMILTON AND DU PORTAIL.

WEST POINT, October 21, 1779.

GENTLEMEN:

In my letters of the tenth and eighteenth, I transmitted all the intelligence I had obtained respecting the enemy, from the time of your departure to those two periods: and by the present conveyance, I inclose you an extract of a letter from Major-General Gates, of the 15th. By this you will perceive, he was fully persuaded that the enemy are now preparing to evacuate Rhode Island; and he expected, from his advices, they would do it on Monday or Tuesday last.

Whether the event has taken place, or not, as yet, is a matter I cannot determine, having received no information since upon the subject. But admitting it has not, there is no room to doubt that they have all things in a condition to do it, on the shortest notice, whenever they shall think the exigency of their affairs requires it. It is also equally certain, that they continue to carry on their fortifications for the defence of New-York with the utmost industry and perseverance; and appear to be providing for the most obstinate resistance. Indeed, as their reduction would be attended with the most alarming and fatal consequences to their nation, nothing else can be reasonably expected. The moment I hear the troops have left Rhode Island, I will advise you.

The garrisons at Verplanck's and Stony Points, still remain; but from the concurring accounts of deserters, the heavy baggage and stores, except about eighteen or twenty rounds for each cannon, are embarked, and all matters are putting in train for an

evacuation, in case events make it necessary. The deserters add, as a circumstance of confirmation, that Sir Henry Clinton was up at the posts about eight days ago; and that, from that time, they have totally declined carrying on any works.

Having given you the substance of the intelligence received since my last, I am led (from the vast magnitude of the object which carried you from head quarters, and the very interesting consequences it may involve, all of which I am persuaded will occur to your consideration) to remark, that the Count's entering New-York Bay with his fleet, must be the basis and groundwork of any co-operation that can be undertaken by us, either for the reduction of the enemy's whole force, or the destruction of their shipping only. Every thing will absolutely depend upon it, in either case; as, without it, and a free and open communication up and down the rivers, and in the Sound, which cannot be effected and maintained in any other way, we could not possibly undertake any operations on Long Island, as our supplies of provisions and stores could only be obtained by water.

This point, I am certain, would have your due consideration; but it appearing to me the hinge, the one thing upon which all others must rest, I could not forbear mentioning it. The circumstance of the season now, the expenditure of wood, and the necessity of supplying it, etc., will of course be fully attended to, according to their importance: and I have only to add, from a desire of preventing a misconception by either side, if any co-operation is agreed on, that the terms and conditions may be explicitly understood. And whether it shall extend to an attempt to reduce the enemy's whole force, or only to the destruction of their shipping; your engagements will provide for the continuance of the Count's fleet, to secure our retreat, and the removal of our stores from Long and York Islands, if, unhappily, it should be found, on experiment, that neither is practicable, and we should be obliged to abandon the enterprise.

I am, Gentlemen,

With great regard and respect,

Your most obedient servant,

G. WASHINGTON.

P. S. 1-4 after three, P. M. Three deserters have just come in, who left Verplanck's Point last night. They all corroborate the accounts, by a detail of circumstances, of the preparations to evacuate both that and Stony Point. I have no doubt that things will at least be held in readiness.

G. WASHINGTON.

After dispatching the above, I received a letter from Major-General Heath, of which the following is a copy.

"I now have the pleasure to acquaint your Excellency, that the enemy have left both Points, having burnt and destroyed their works."

General Du Portail.

Colonel Hamilton.

MANDEVILLE'S, Oct. 21, 1779. 4 o'clock, P. M.

HENRY LEE TO HAMILTON.

MONMOUTH, Oct. 22d, 1779.

MY DEAR SIR:

I received your two letters announcing your object, route and wishes. I sent to you at Lewistown two pilots; one of them Captain Schuyler, from whom you may know more than from any other, as he was particularly active.

The enemy's strength at the Hook consists in two 64's, the Europa and Russell; the Raisonable, Renown, Roebuck and Romulus.

Besides these they have ten frigates and some armed schooners. They have sunk ten hulks in the outer channel, and have more ready to be sunk; some of those sunk have got afloat and reached shore.

They have also two fire ships. My latest accounts from New-York, mention that all was attention and labor among the troops. Works are erecting on both sides the Narrows and on Governor's Island.

Head quarters in Long Island. Evacuation of Rhode Island not yet taken place. A vessel got in on the 16th from Georgia, since whose arrival, the two 64's, and the Renown have fallen down to New-York.

The troops have embarked from the Hook and gone to the city.

I construe these movements as indicatory of the Count's withdrawal from the coast. Do write me whenever you may hear certainly from the fleet. You will regularly be informed of what passes here.

I am, dear Sir,
Yours affectionately,
HENRY LEE.

Col. Hamilton.

MITCHELL TO HAMILTON.

PHILADELPHIA, 23d October, 1779.

SIR:

Your favor of the 18th instant from Lewistown, came duly to hand, and in consequence of your request, expresses have been stationed at proper distances on the road between this and Lewistown.

Yours of the 19th from Egg Harbor, came to hand at half-past two, and yours of the 22d instant, from Col. Westcoat's, came to hand at three o'clock this afternoon.

I shall only observe in answer to your last note, which came unsealed, that you have met with no delays from me, since your arrival in this city from His Excellency's head quarters, nor shall any delays or neglects be given you by the Department that I can prevent.

Your letter to the President of Congress is delivered. I have shown him yours to me. Congress is now sitting, but I shall wait till they rise in order that his dispatches may go with this conveyance; three expresses set out with this to attend any orders you may have to dispatch. If you find more necessary, you shall have them.

I had letters from His Excellency yesterday, but none for you or General Portail. This day letters came from Charleston, which mention that all the British forces in Carolina and Georgia had got to Savannah, where they were invested by the Count D'Estaing, and the American forces. He had carried his approaches within four hundred yards of their works, and expected they would surrender in two or three days; the Experiment taken, and several other ships and their naval force destroyed: but I expect the President will give you a more particular account; those accounts are by private letters of good authority. Mr. Laurens was my informant.

I have sent you per the express, Mr. Trueman Kirk of O'Mooney, four horses, the best I can procure in so short a time; one of them is a horse you left here. It is with great difficulty horses can be procured sufficient to do the public business.

The President of Congress informs me he cannot write at present. The accounts from the southward are as late as the 4th instant, on which day the Count's batteries were to open.

I am with esteem and compl'ts to General Portail—Sir,

Your most obed't servant,

JNO. MITCHELL,

D. Q. Mst.

A letter from His Excellency for you and Gen. Portail was sent to Lewistown on the 19th inst., but suppose it will be returned; if so, no time shall be lost in sending it.

Col. Alexander Hamilton.

WASHINGTON TO HAMILTON AND DU PORTAIL.

HEAD QUARTERS, WEST POINT, October 25, 1779.

GENTLEMEN:

I have just received a letter from Colonel Hamilton, mentioning your having changed your position, at Lewistown, for that of Little Egg Harbor; and that you would write me more fully on your arrival at the Furnace.

In my last I informed you that the enemy had evacuated both their posts at King's Ferry; since which, no alteration has taken place that has come to my knowledge. Things at Rhode Island remain in the same situation; at least I have received no accounts, either confirming or contradicting my former intelligence.

I am, Gentlemen, your most ob't,
Humble servant,
G. WASHINGTON.

Gen. Du Portail.
Colonel Hamilton.

DU PORTAIL AND HAMILTON TO WASHINGTON.

GREAT EGG HARBOR LANDING, October 26, 1779.

SIR:

We are honored with two letters from your Excellency, of the 10th and 21st; to the contents of which we beg leave to assure you of our strictest attention.

That of the 18th has not yet come to hand. It is not improbable, it has gone round by Lewistown, which has occasioned the delay.

Colonel Hamilton wrote to your Excellency from Philadelphia, acquainting you with our arrival there, and our intention to proceed to Lewistown, Cape Henlopen, and from Great Egg Harbor, communicating our progress since, and our determination to establish ourselves at Bat Stove Furnace. We have since fixed on this place, about forty-four miles from the extremity of Cape May (eighteen miles short of the Furnace, which we found to be more remote than had been represented), and, as far as we have been able to learn, from 100 to 110 miles of Sandy Hook, and about 50 from Philadelphia. Your Excellency will easily perceive the reason of our choosing this station. It did not appear to us, from our inquiries in Philadelphia, to be a point well ascertained, that the fleet would stop at the Delaware; and the time which had elapsed, made it more possible, if the Count

should be determined to prosecute any further operations on the continent, that he would not lose time by a procedure of this sort, but might content himself with sending some transports, under escort of a few frigates, to receive the provisions for the fleet, and proceed himself directly on to the Hook. On this supposition, our position at Lewistown was entirely ineligible. The distance at which we were from the city, as well as from the Hook; the delays that would consequently attend our intelligence from every quarter; the difficulty and impossibility, sometimes, of traversing the Bay, made our first situation inconvenient in every respect, in the event of the fleet's proceeding immediately to the Hook. These considerations induced us to cross the Delaware, and take the position at which we now are; where, or in the vicinity, we propose to remain till the arrival of the Count; till intelligence from him decides the inutility of a longer stay; or till we receive your Excellency's orders of recall.

We have now a better relation to the different points in which we are interested, and have taken the necessary precautions to gain the earliest notice of whatever happens. We have stationed expresses at the pitch of the Cape, and have established a regular communication with Major Lee, and with the city. If the fleet should appear off the Delaware, we can be there in twelve hours after its first appearance; and if at the Hook, in less than four days; provided Major Lee is punctual in conveying the intelligence, and the expresses, from either side, in bringing it.

By recent information from Philadelphia (though not quite so distinct and accurate as we could wish), we find, that so late as the fourth of this month, the Count, as yet, was to open his batteries against the enemy at Savannah. The time that will probably intervene between this and the final reduction; the re-embarkation of the Count's troops; the dispositions for sailing, and his arrival on this coast; may, we fear, exhaust the season too much to permit of the co-operation to which our mission relates.

We do not, however, despair; for if the Count has been fully

successful to the southward, and should shortly arrive (which may be the case), the enterprise may possibly go on.

In a letter from Major Lee, of the 22d, he informs us, that a vessel from Georgia arrived on the 16th; since which the two sixty-fours, and the Renown, which were at the Hook, had fallen down towards New-York; and the troops at the Hook had embarked and gone to the city. At first sight, this account alarmed us, and made us apprehensive that the enemy had received some favorable advices from the southward, which put them out of danger, and superseded the necessity of continuing their preparations for defence. But, on further reflection, we think it more probable, that this is only a change of disposition; and that finding, on closer examination, they would be unable to defend the Hook, they had determined to relinquish the attempt.

This seems the more likely, as Major Lee mentions, that a part of the hulks, sunk in the channel, had gotten afloat and drifted ashore.

To this experience of the difficulty of obstructing the channel, may, perhaps, be attributed the change we suppose. And we are confirmed in this conjecture, by the evacuation of the two posts at King's Ferry, which appears, by your Excellency's letter, to have taken place on the 21st, five days after the supposed arrival of the vessel from Georgia; a proof that they had not received information of any decisive good fortune on their side, or ill fortune on ours; and that they persisted in their defensive plan. We are persuaded, too, that their exultation would have given wings to any good news they might have received, and that it would have reached us before this. Were the season less advanced, we should regret this change of disposition; because we believe the attempt to defend the entrance of the Hook would have been fruitless; and it might have thrown a part of their ships, and of their troops, into our hands, in the first instance, which could not fail to facilitate the successive operations.

But, at this late period, it may rather be an advantage. To force the passage, might have required land operations against the Hook, which would lose time and expose the fleet

to the hazard of winds, which would have rendered its situation critical. Now, the fleet may probably enter the bay, on its first approach, and be in security: and the whole operation will be brought to a point, and may demand less time for its accomplishment.

As a large number of fascines, ready for use, appear to us essential to any operations that may be undertaken, we presume your Excellency has been preparing, and will continue to prepare as many as possible. We beg leave to suggest the utility of having, at the same time, a sufficient number of gabions and sand bags. Of the former, Colonel Gouvion, if your Excellency thinks proper, may be charged with the constructing: the latter may be made under the care of the Quarter-Master at Philadelphia. Several thousands may be necessary. The usual dimensions are fifteen or eighteen inches long, and twelve wide. If, notwithstanding the advices from Major Lee, any thing by land is to be attempted against the Hook, these will be peculiarly useful on such a flat, sandy spot; and, indeed, it would be impracticable to construct batteries, in any reasonable time, without them.

We have the honor to be,
Sir, your most obedient and
Humble servants,
A. HAMILTON.
DU PORTAIL.

His Excellency Gen. Washington.

HENRY LEE TO HAMILTON.

October 29, 1779.

MY DEAR SIR:

I have nothing new since my last; only a report aboard the Navy at the Hook, purporting two naval actions, the one in the English Channel between the grand fleets: the second in the West Indies: in the former the British were worsted; the Ar-

dent, man-of-war, Admiral Gambier, sunk, and the fleet drove into two different ports where they were blocked up; in the latter the French were much damaged, and four of their capital ships taken.

Lt. Col. Simcoe has made lately a very extraordinary tour to Middlebrook: he burnt the boats, magazine of forage, court-house, meeting-house, took two officers at Mr. Vanhorn's, and lost himself near Brunswick. The party got safe to South Amboy. I send you a letter from head quarters.

Adieu.

Yours affectionately,

HENRY LEE.

Col. Hamilton.

WASHINGTON TO HAMILTON AND DU PORTAIL.

HEAD QUARTERS, WEST POINT, November 1, 1779.

GENTLEMEN:

I have this day been favored with yours of twenty-sixth ult., informing me of your removal to Great Egg Harbor. My letter of the eighteenth, which had not reached you, went, as you supposed, by way of Philadelphia; and, lest any accident may have happened to it, I inclose you a duplicate. Mine of the thirtieth ultimo, which went through Major Lee, informed you of the evacuation of Rhode Island. I have since received a letter of the twenty-first ultimo, from my confidential correspondent in New-York. He informs me that Rawdon's corps, the 57th, and some of the artillery, were then embarked: and it was said, and generally believed, that they were bound to Halifax. That the Robuste, of seventy-four guns, had arrived the twentieth, from Halifax; and that a number of transports were taking in water and ballast. He gave me nothing further worth communicating.

You will find, by the letter of the 18th, that a provision of fascines and gabions was making; and I shall give directions to the Quarter-Master-General, to provide a quantity of sand bags.

I am sorry to inform you, that Colonel La Rodiere died on

Saturday last. He is to be buried this day with the honors due to his rank.

I am, with great esteem, Gentlemen,
Your most obedient servant,
G. WASHINGTON.

P. S. Upon a presumption that Colonel Laurens will be on board the fleet, the inclosed are sent to you.

Brigadier-General Du Portail.
Colonel Hamilton.

WASHINGTON TO DU PORTAIL AND HAMILTON.

HEAD QUARTERS, WEST POINT, November 2, 1779.

GENTLEMEN:

Since mine of yesterday, I have received another letter from my confidential correspondent in New-York, dated the twenty-ninth ultimo. He informs me, that the fifty-seventh regiment, Rawdon's corps, and the artillery mentioned in his last, were to sail on that day for Halifax; and with them, all the heavy ships of war, except the Europa. The Daphne frigate, with Sir George Collier and Colonel Stewart on board, was to sail for England the same day. He says the pilots reported, that it was now difficult to bring a vessel into the Hook, on account of the hulks sunk there. (By this it would seem that some of them still remained upon the shoals.) He says the transports mentioned in his last, as taking in water and ballast, only carried it down to the ships at the Hook. The Rainbow, of forty guns, had arrived from Halifax. He informs me of no other circumstances that materially relate to affairs in New-York. He says a packet arrived from England on the twenty-third October. The accounts brought by her seemed to alarm the tories very much. It was reported that the Ardent, of sixty-four guns, had been taken, and the English fleet chased into Portsmouth by the combined fleet, which remained off that place several days. He

mentions these matters as current reports, and adds, that a fleet of victuallers were to sail from Cork the latter end of September, and another of store ships and merchantmen, from Spithead, about the same time.

I am, with great regard, Gentlemen,
Your most obedient servant,
G. WASHINGTON.

The capture of the Ardent is confirmed by a New-York paper of the twentieth ultimo.

General Du Portail and Colonel Hamilton.

DU PORTAIL TO HAMILTON.

SAMEDI MATIN, 1779.

MON CHER COLONEL:

J'ai beaucoup revé depuis hier à l'affaire de Caroline, et je trouve toujours dans ma tête les mêmes choses, la même façon de voir, les mêmes dispositions, que je vais vous expliquer en deux mots. Je serais certainement bien aise d'aller en Caroline pendant cet hiver, mais je ne voudrais pas absolument le demander, parceque, si je le demande, on ne me saura plus de gré, que je n'irai pas avec le même agrément, que je ne pourrai faire aucune espèce d'arrangements qui me donne le moyen d'etre vraiment utile là bas, qu'il me vaudra voyager à mes depens, ce que l'état de mes finances ne me permet pas, etc., etc. Je ne désire donc y aller que dans le cas ou le Congrès ayant par exemple assez bonne opinion de moi pour croire que dans le moment critique je puis être nécessaire dans le pays, il penserait de long même ou avertis par quelqu'un à m'y envoyer, ne pourriez vous donc pas mon cher Colonel, à propos de la demande du Géneral Washington au Congrès, observer, *comme de vous même*, au Géneral, que si je voulais aller passer mon hiver en Caroline cela serait peut-être fort avantageuese. Si le Général le jugeait ainsi, probablement, il vous demanderait si vous

croyez que cela me convient d'ailleurs et me fit plaisir. Sur cela vous poussiez lui répondre que vous en êtes persuadé, et que je vous ai fait entrevoir même que dans cette circonstance, je désirerais que le Géneral et le Congrès jugeassent à propos de m'envoyer dans le sud, mais pour le moment de crise seulement, souhaitant de revenir pour ses ordres au commencement de la Congrès prochaine. Le Géneral prendrait donc la résolution pour cela de me donner les ordres nécessaires, si je n'ai besoin que des siens, ou s'il pense que le Congrès doit intervenir, d'expliquer au Congrès sa façon de penser à cet égard. Ceci suffit à quelqu'un d'aussi intelligent que vous, pour négocier sous le pied ou je désire, ainsi je laisse le reste à faire à votre amitié. Que cette lettre d'ailleurs soit un secret entre nous, de quelque façon que l'affaire tourne; mais je désire absolument d'être gratifié en ceci. Adieu je vous attends à diner et j'ai l'honneur d'être.

GENERAL DU PORTAIL.

Col. Hamilton.

HAMILTON TO LAURENS.

Cold in my professions—warm in my friendships—I wish, my dear Laurens, it were in my power, by actions, rather than words, to convince you that I love you. I shall only tell you, that till you bid us adieu, I hardly knew the value you had taught my heart to set upon you. Indeed, my friend, it was not well done. You know the opinion I entertain of mankind; and how much it is my desire to preserve myself free from particular attachments, and to keep my happiness independent of the caprices of others. You should not have taken advantage of my sensibility, to steal into my affections without my consent.

But as you have done it, and as we are generally indulgent to those we love, I shall not scruple to pardon the fraud you have committed, on one condition; that for my sake, if not for your own, you will continue to merit the partiality which you have so artfully instilled into me.

I have received your two letters: one from Philadelphia, the other from Chester. I am pleased with your success so far; and I hope the favorable omens that precede your application to the Assembly, may have as favorable an issue; provided the situation of affairs should require it, which I fear will be the case. But, both for your country's sake and for my own, I wish the enemy may be gone from Georgia before you arrive; and that you may be obliged to return, and share the fortunes of your old friends. In respect to the commission which you received from Congress, all the world must think your conduct perfectly right. Indeed, your ideas upon this occasion seem not to have their wonted accuracy; and you have had scruples, in a great measure, without foundation. By your appointment as Aid-de-Camp to the Commander-in-Chief, you had as much the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel as any officer in the line. Your receiving a commission as Lieutenant-Colonel, from the date of that appointment, does not, in the least, injure or interfere with one of them; unless, by virtue of it, you are introduced into a particular regiment, in violation of the right of succession, which is not the case at present, neither is it a necessary consequence. As you were going to command a battalion, it was proper you should have a commission; and if this commission had been dated posterior to your appointment as Aid-de-Camp, I should have considered it derogatory to your former rank, to mine, and to that of the whole corps. The only thing I see wrong in the affair is this: Congress, by their conduct, both on the former and present occasion, appear to have intended to confer a privilege, an honor, a mark of distinction, a something upon you, which they withheld from other gentlemen of the family. This carries with it an air of preference, which, though we can all truly say we love your character and admire your military merit, cannot fail to give some of us uneasy sensations. But in this, my dear, I wish you to understand me well. The blame, if there is any, falls wholly upon Congress. I repeat it, your conduct has been perfectly right, and even laudable. You rejected the offer when you ought to have rejected it; and you accepted it when you ought to have accepted it; and let me add

with a degree of over-scrupulous delicacy. It was necessary to your project. Your project was the public good; and I should have done the same. In hesitating, you have refined on the refinements of generosity.

There is a total stagnation of news here. Gates has refused the Indian command. Sullivan is come to take it. The former has lately given a fresh proof of his impudence, his folly, and his *********. 'Tis no great matter; but a peculiarity in the case prevents my saying what.

Fleury shall be taken care of. All the family send love. In this, join the General and Mrs. Washington; and what is best, it is not in the style of ceremony, but sincerity.

LAURENS TO HAMILTON.

PHILADELPHIA, December 12, 1779.

MY DEAR HAMILTON:

Upon my arrival here yesterday evening, I communicated the intelligence received from General Wayne, to the President of Congress and the French minister. The latter surprised me greatly, by informing me, that only one 74 gun ship of the Count De Grasse's division, and the Fier Rodrigue, had arrived at Chesapeake. I am at a loss how to account for the absence of the rest. They have not been within the reach of a superior enemy's force: no storm has happened, within our knowledge, to drive them to any considerable distance from the coast. It cannot rationally be supposed that the Count has received countermanding orders, and that a capital ship of the line, together with a very valuable warlike merchantman, is to be sacrificed. Be the case as it may, all hopes of passing our reinforcement for the southern department, by sea, are out of the question. The North Carolina Brigade, after profiting by the navigation of the Delaware as far as it would serve them, marched to the head of

Elk. Thence they proceed, by water, across the Chesapeake, and up to Petersburgh, where they are to be overtaken by their wagons, and pursue the rest of their way by the middle road to Charleston. This is the route marked by the Board of War, and a Committee of Congress appointed to confer with them; and I believe it was recommended by Doctor Burke, one of the North Carolina delegates lately from that country. It is intended that the Virginians should pursue the same as far as Petersburgh, where they are to take an upper road. In this route we do not avail ourselves of Albemarle Sound. The going up the river to Petersburgh will certainly be tedious; and four hundred miles land march is to be executed from thence. I communicated these objections to Mr. Matthews, and proposed the route which the General pointed out; but the poverty of the country in provision, and the means of transporting the baggage of the troops, he said, would outweigh the advantages of the water carriage and direct road. I am by no means satisfied with the present arrangement, when I reflect how much more rapidly the British may convey their reinforcements: but all the inquiries I have made hitherto, have produced nothing favorable to our plan. Indeed, in the present unguarded state of the Chesapeake, the British might render the passage even of that ineligible.

Mr. Serle, a member of Congress, who arrived in town last night from the neighborhood of Major Leigh's post, asserts, that no transports were at the Hook on Wednesday. Whether the British operations are delayed by false rumors of Count De Grasse's division; or whether they have heard, as we have here, that Count D'Estaing was still on the coast the twentieth of November, I cannot decide: but one would be inclined to think, that they are disconcerted, either by false intelligence, or a total defect of it. I entreat you, my dear friend, to transmit me the earliest and most accurate relation that can be obtained, of the British movements; and enlighten me with your observations upon them. Present my respects and love to our excellent General and the family. May you enjoy all the pleasure, moral and physical, which you promise yourself in winter quarters, and be as happy as you deserve.

Tell the Doctor I shall commit his darling to the press this morning.

Yours, ever,
JOHN LAURENS.

Colonel Hamilton.

LAURENS TO HAMILTON.

PHILADELPHIA, December 18, 1779.

MY DEAR HAMILTON:

On my arrival in town, I was informed by the President, that Congress had suspended the business of appointing a secretary to their minister plenipotentiary at Versailles, until my return, in hopes that I might still be prevailed upon to accept the office. I replied, that I thought my letter upon the subject sufficiently explicit; and assured him of my sincere desire to be excused from serving in that capacity at the present juncture of our affairs.

He urged the unanimity of the choice with respect to me; the difficulty of uniting the suffrages of all parties, in case of a new nomination; and the advantages of this union. Several delegates of Congress declared to me the embarrassment of Congress since I had declined. One, in particular, suggested to me his apprehension of interest being made for a late delegate of New-York, who is candidate for the office, and to whom the world, in general, allows greater credit for his abilities than his integrity; and said, "he was determined to oppose him with all his influence." When I quitted town the sixteenth, these matters crowded into my mind. I fell into a train of serious reflections and self-examination; endeavored to investigate whether I had acted consonantly to the *καλον και αγαθον*, and fulfilled the duties of a good citizen in this transaction. In fine, I agitated the grand question, Whether a citizen has a right to decline any office to which his countrymen appoint him; upon what that right is founded; and whether it existed in my case.

After undergoing the severest conflict that ever I experi-

enced; sometimes reproaching, sometimes justifying myself; pursuing my journey, or turning retrograde; as the arguments on the one side or the other appeared to prevail; I determined that I had been deficient in the duties of a good citizen. I returned to Philadelphia; communicated my sentiments to the President and two other members; and declared to them, that I thought it incumbent on me, in the first place, to recommend a person equally qualified in point of integrity, and much better in point of ability. That if, unhappily, they could not agree upon Colonel Hamilton, and that I was absolutely necessary to exclude a dangerous person, or to prevent pernicious delays, I should think it my duty to obey the orders of Congress. The persons now in nomination, are, Colonel Hamilton, Mr. Lovell, Mr. G. Morris, Major Stewart. I am sorry that you are not better known to Congress. Great stress is laid upon the probity and patriotism of the person to be employed in this commission. I have given my testimony of you in this, and the other equally essential points.

I am sorry to inform you, that the North Carolina brigade had not quitted Elk the sixteenth; having been detained by the ice.

I am sorry to write you, just as I am on the wing. Be so good as to thank Tilghman for his letter. Inform him, from Mr. Mitchell, that his habiliments are making.

My love as usual. Adieu.

JOHN LAURENS.

Colonel Hamilton.

LAURENS TO HAMILTON.

CHARLESTON, 1779.

Ternant will relate to you how many violent struggles I have had between duty and inclination—how much my heart was with you, while I appeared to be most actively employed here. But it appears to me that I should be inexcusable in the light of

a citizen, if I did not continue my utmost efforts for carrying the plan of the black levies into execution, while there remains the smallest hopes of success.

Our army is reduced to nothing almost, by the departure of the Virginians. Scott's arrival will scarcely restore us to our ancient number. If the enemy destine the reinforcements from Great Britain to this quarter, as in policy they ought to do, that number will be insufficient for the security of our country. The Governor, among other matters to be laid before the House of Assembly, intends to propose the completing our continental battalions by drafts from the militia. This measure, I am told, is so unpopular that there is no hope of succeeding in it. Either this must be adopted, or the black levies, or the State will fall a victim to the improvidence of its inhabitants.

The House of Representatives have had a longer recess than usual, occasioned by the number of members in the field. It will be convened, however, in a few days. I intend to qualify, and make a final effort. Oh that I were a Demosthenes! The Athenians never deserved a more bitter exprobation than our countrymen.

General Clinton's movements, and your march in consequence, made me wish to be with you. If any thing important should be done in your quarter, while I am doing daily penance here, and making useless harangues, I shall execrate my stars, and be out of humor with the world. I entreat you, my dear friend, write me as freely as circumstances will permit, and enlighten me upon what is going forward.

Adieu. My love to our colleagues. I am afraid I was so thoughtless as to omit my remembrances to Gibbs. Tell him that I am always his sincere well-wisher, and hope to laugh with him again ere long.

Adieu again. Yours ever,

JOHN LAURENS.

HAMILTON TO ROBERT MORRIS.

SIR:

The present conjuncture is by all allowed to be peculiarly critical. Every man of reflection employs his thoughts about the remedies proper to be applied to the national disorders; and every one, from a partiality to his own ideas, wishes to convey them to those who are charged with the management of affairs. The channel of the public papers, commonly made use of for the purpose, appears to me exceptionable on several accounts. It not only restrains a freedom of discussion, from the extreme delicacy of the subject; but the discussion itself increases the evil, by exposing our weak sides to the popular eye, and adding false terrors to those well-founded apprehensions which our situation authorizes.

Instead of pursuing this method, I prefer addressing myself to a member of that body, in whose power alone it is, by well-digested system, to extricate us from our embarrassments. I have pitched upon you, from a personal knowledge of your abilities and zeal. If I offer any thing new and useful, I am persuaded you will endeavor to turn it to advantage. If the contrary is the case, I am, at least, doing no harm. I shall only have had the trouble of writing, and you of reading, a few useless pages.

The object of principal concern is the state of our currency. In my opinion, all our speculations on this head have been founded in error. Most people think, that the depreciation might have been avoided, by provident arrangements in the beginning, without any aid from abroad: and a great many of our sanguine politicians, till very lately, imagined the money might still be restored by expedients within ourselves. Hence the delay in attempting to procure a foreign loan.

This idea proceeded from an ignorance of the real extent of our resources. The war, particularly in the first periods, required exertions beyond our strength, to which neither our population nor riches were equal. We have the fullest proof of this, in the constant thinness of our armies; the impossibility, at this time, of recruiting them otherwise than by compulsion; the scarcity of

hands in husbandry, and other occupations; the decrease of our staple commodities; and the difficulty of every species of supply. I am aware that the badness of the money has its influence; but it was originally an effect, not a cause, though it now partakes of the nature of both. A part of those evils would appear, were our finances in a more flourishing condition. We experienced them before the money was materially depreciated; and they contributed to its depreciation. The want of men soon obliged the public to pay extravagant wages for them in every department. Agriculture languished from a defect of hands. The mechanic arts did the same. The price of every kind of labor increased: and the articles of foreign commerce, from the interruption it received, more than kept pace with other things.

The relative value of money being determined by the greater or less portion of labor and commodities which it will purchase; whatever these gained in price, that of course lost in value.

The public expenditures, from the dearness of every thing, necessarily became immense; greater in proportion than in other countries; and much beyond any revenues which the best concerted scheme of finance could have extracted from the natural funds of the State. No taxes, which the people were capable of bearing, on that quantity of money which is deemed a proper medium for this country (had it been gold instead of paper), would have been sufficient for the current exigencies of Government.

The most opulent States of Europe, in a war of any duration, are commonly obliged to have recourse to foreign loans or subsidies.* How, then, could we expect to do without them, and

* France owes a debt of near two hundred millions of pounds sterling; of which about twenty-eight millions is due to Governments and individuals in the United Provinces.

England owes a debt not much short: of which about thirty millions is likewise due in the United Provinces.

The United Provinces, themselves, owe a debt of the generality, of fifty millions sterling besides the particular debts of each province. Russia, Prussia, Denmark. Sweden, all owe money to the United Provinces, notwithstanding the assistance of their mines. These Governments, too, are patterns of economy. Sweden receives a constant supply from France. The House of Austria is also to be included in the

not augment the quantity of our artificial wealth beyond those bounds which were proper to preserve its credit? The idea was chimerical.

The quantity of money formerly in circulation among us, is estimated at about thirty millions of dollars. This was barely sufficient for our interior commerce. Our exterior commerce was chiefly carried on by barter. We sent our commodities abroad, and brought back others in return. The balance of the principal branch was against us; and the little *specie* derived from others, was transferred directly to the payment of that balance, without passing into home circulation. It would have been impracticable, by loans and taxes, to bring such a portion of the forementioned sum into the public coffers as would have answered the purposes of the war: nor could it have spared so considerable a part, without obstructing the operations of domestic commerce. Taxes are limited, not only by the quantity of wealth in a State, but by the temper, habits, and genius of the people; all which, in this country, conspired to render them moderate: and as to loans, men will not be prevailed upon to lend money to the public when there is a scarcity, and they can find a more profitable way of employing it otherwise, as was our case.

The ordinary revenues of the United Provinces amount to about twenty-five millions of guilders; or two millions two hundred and fifty thousand pounds sterling per annum. This is, in proportion to its territory and numbers, the richest country in the world; and the country where the people sustain the heaviest

catalogue. Spain is almost the only considerable European power to be excepted; but this is to be attributed to that inexhaustible fund of treasure which she possesses in the mines of South America.

The King of Prussia is one of those potentates the least in debt; notwithstanding he has a long time made a figure in Europe, much above what the comparative strength and resources of his kingdom entitled him to expect. This his superior genius has effected. By a wise administration, he maintains an army of one hundred and fifty thousand men, nearly equal to that of France, with one-third of its people, and less than a third of its riches. This he does by judicious arrangements; by a rigid economy; and by a species of commerce, which is carried on, on account of the State. There are several public manufactories, from which the army is supplied; and by the help of which, the money paid out with one hand is taken in by the other.

load of taxes. Its population is about equal to ours, two millions of souls. The burthens on the subject are so great, that it is by some held almost impracticable, even on extraordinary emergencies, to enlarge the revenues by new impositions. It is maintained, their dependence, in these cases, must be on the extraordinary contributions of wealthy individuals; with the aid of which, in some of their wars, they have raised four millions sterling a year. In a country possessed of so vast a stock of wealth, where taxes are carried to such a height; and where the means of paying them so infinitely exceed those in our power; if the national revenues only amount to the sum I have stated, how inadequate must have been the product of any taxes we could have levied, to the demands of the service! Loans, for the reason before hinted, would have been out of the question; at least, they would have been so trifling as to be an object of little importance. Suppose we should have been able to raise a million sterling, annually; a sum that probably would have exceeded our ability; how unequal would this have been to our wants!* No economy could have made it bear any proportion, especially if we recur to the causes already enumerated, by which the currency depreciated in its first stages.

From these reasonings it results, that it was not in the power of Congress, when their emissions had arrived at the thirty millions of dollars, to put a stop to them.† They were obliged, in order to keep up the supplies, to go on creating artificial revenues by new emissions; and as these multiplied, their value declined. The progress of the depreciation might have been retarded, but it could not have been prevented. It was, in a great degree, necessary.

There was but one remedy; a foreign loan. All other expedients should rather have been considered as auxiliary. Could

* This will appear, by recurring to our expenses in the commencement of the war, before the money was depreciated. In '75, which was only three-fourths of a year, the emissions amounted to seven millions of dollars: in '76, to fourteen millions. The war did not begin, in earnest, till '76.

† This is meant, without employing the assistance of a foreign loan, and of other expedients beside borrowing and taxing.

a loan have been obtained, and judiciously applied, assisted by a vigorous system of taxation, we might have avoided that excess of emissions which has ruined the paper. The credit of such a fund would have procured loans from the moneyed and trading men within ourselves; because it might have been so directed, as to have been beneficial to them in their commercial transactions abroad.*

The necessity for a foreign loan is now greater than ever. Nothing else will retrieve our affairs.

The wheels of Government, without it, cannot much longer be kept in motion. Including Loan-office certificates, and State emissions, we have about four hundred millions of dollars in circulation. The real value of these, is less than seven millions, which is the true circulating medium of these States: for though the price of specie is and the rate of exchange for sterling bills the nominal value of every commodity is at least sixty to one, on an average. All the reasonings against the possibility of raising the current expenses on the foundation of thirty millions, apply to our present situation in the ratio of thirty to seven; that is, it is as thirty to seven less practicable now than when our emissions amounted to only thirty millions. Could every dollar in circulation be brought annually into the treasury, which never was effected in any country, and is politically impossible, the revenue would not be equal to the yearly expense.

The hope of appreciating the money, by taxes and domestic loans, is at an end. As fast as it could be received, it must be issued in the daily expenditures. The momentary interval between its being drawn out of circulation and returning into it, would prevent its receiving the least advantage.

These reasonings may appear useless, as the necessity of a foreign loan is now acknowledged, and measures are taking to procure it. But they are intended to establish good principles; the want of which has brought us to the desperate crisis we are arrived at, and may still betray us into fatal mistakes.

How this loan is to be employed, is now the question; and

* This will appear from the plan which will be proposed.

its difficulty equal to its importance! Two plans have been proposed: one, to purchase up at once, in specie, or sterling bills, all superfluous paper; and to endeavor, by taxes, loans, and economy, to hinder its returning into circulation. The remainder, it is supposed, would then recover its value. This, it is said, will reduce our public debt to the sterling cost of the paper.

Suppose two hundred millions were to be purchased, and the rest called in by taxes. At this would require bills to the amount of of dollars. But I doubt whether four times this sum would be sufficient. The moment it was known such purchases were to be made, the avarice of the speculators would begin to operate: the demand would immediately occasion an artificial appreciation; each successive million would cost more than the preceding. But this appreciation would be more relative to the purchasing medium than to the prices of commodities. The raising the value of the paper relative to the former, would depend on the combination of a few artful individuals, and would be easily accomplished. The diminution of prices must be slow, as it implies a change in the sentiments of the body of the people with respect to the money. A sudden revolution in the general rates of all the necessaries of life is not to be expected. The prices of these, as they have reached their present summit by degrees, must, by degrees, revert to their former station. The minds of the people will not readily admit impressions in favor of the currency. All their past experience has given a habit of diffidence; and the epidemical spirit of extortion will maintain a violent struggle with whatever has a tendency to produce a fall of prices. A permanent reduction of the quantity of circulating cash, will alone gradually effect it. But this will not happen on the present plan.

The necessity of continuing the supplies at nearly the same rates now given (which would be the case if my reasonings are true), would have nearly the same effect mentioned with respect to taxes and domestic loans. The money would return into circulation almost as fast as it was drawn out: and at the end of the year we should find our treasury empty; our foreign loan dissipated; and the state of our finances as deplorable as ever. At

a moderate calculation, we should have spent ten or twelve millions of real dollars, for the sole purpose of carrying on the war another year. It would be much better, instead of purchasing up the paper currency, to purchase the supplies out of our specie or bills. In the first instance, the public would suffer a direct loss of the artificial appreciation, relative to the purchasing medium: in the last, it would buy at the value of the commodities in specie or bills.

A great source of error in disquisitions of this nature, is the judging of events by abstract calculations; which, though geometrically true, are false as they relate to the concerns of beings governed more by passion and prejudice, than by an enlightened sense of their interests. A degree of illusion mixes itself in all the affairs of society. The opinion of objects has more influence than their real nature. The quantity of money in circulation is certainly a chief cause of its decline: but we find it is depreciated more than five times as much as it ought to be by this rule. The excess is derived from opinion; a want of confidence. In like manner we deceive ourselves, when we suppose the value will increase in proportion as the quantity is lessened. Opinion will operate here also; and a thousand circumstances may promote or counteract the principle.

The other plan proposed, is to convert the loan into merchandise, and import it on public account. This plan is incomparably better than the former. Instead of losing on the sale of its specie or bills, the public would gain a considerable profit on the commodities imported. The loan would go much further this way, in supplying the expenses of the war; and a large stock of valuable commodities, useful to the army and to the country, would be introduced. This would affect the prices of things in general, and assist the currency. But the arts of monopolizers would prevent its having so extensive and durable an influence as it ought to have.

A great impediment to the success of this, as well as the former scheme, will be the vast sums requisite for the current expenses. The arguments adduced in the former case are applicable here also, though not with equal force. The necessity the

public will be under of parting with its stock to defray the daily demands, will give designing men an opportunity, by combinations not to purchase, to oblige it to sell at a rate below the real value of money. This they may the more easily effect, as the demand for foreign commodities is much less than formerly, on account of the general spirit of parsimony which has obtained from necessity, and the manufactures carried on in private families for their own use. The greatest part of the country people now almost entirely clothe themselves.

The public must either sell very cheap, to collect rapidly the superfluous paper in hopes of raising the value of the remainder; or it must sell very slow, to preserve the due proportion between the articles it has for sale and those it wants to buy. By pursuing the first method, it will soon exhaust its stock at a very considerable loss, and only give temporary relief to the currency. According to my principle, though it sells cheap, it must still buy dear; and, consequently, the money collected cannot remain in the treasury long enough to preserve the rise in its appreciated state. If it pursues the second method, the expenditures will be equal to the income; and though the public will make the natural profits on its goods, as it will lay up nothing, it will do nothing towards the appreciation.*

The farmers have the game in their own hands, and will

* To form an idea of the effect of this plan, let it be supposed that the goods imported amount to two millions of pounds sterling, and that these sell at one hundred and fifty pounds in paper, for each pound sterling. The whole proceeds will be eight hundred millions of dollars: to these add two hundred millions, raised in taxes. There will then be in the hands of the public, one thousand millions of dollars; which, at sixty to one, gives sixteen millions six hundred and sixty-six thousand six hundred and sixty-six and two-thirds of real dollars. Take the year '76 for a standard, and suppose fourteen millions of dollars to be the proper annual expense of the war, which is only two millions six hundred and sixty-six thousand six hundred and sixty-six and two-thirds less than the whole amount of the goods and taxes. At this rate, the plan would do little more than defray the expenses of the war for one year. But this calculation is not exactly true; because the money would certainly appreciate, in some degree, by the reduction of its quantity: yet, as this reduction would not last, at least in the same extent, to preserve the appreciation; and as, in proportion to the appreciation, the price of goods must fall, and bring less money in, it is difficult to say whether it would not ultimately come to the same thing.

make it very difficult to lower the prices of their commodities. For want of laborers, there is no great superfluity of the most essential articles raised. These are things of absolute necessity, and must be purchased, as well by the other classes of society as by the public. The farmers, on the contrary, if they do not like the price, are not obliged to sell; because they have almost every necessary within themselves; salt, and one or two more, excepted; which bear a small proportion to what is wanted from them; and which they can obtain, by barter, for other articles equally indispensable. Heavy taxes, it may be said, will oblige them to sell; but they can pay, with a small part of what they have, any taxes our legislatures will venture to impose, or would be able to enforce.

One measure, alone, can counterbalance these advantages of the farmers, and oblige them to contribute their proper quota to the support of Government: a tax in kind.

This ought instantly to begin throughout the States. The present quantity of cash, though nominally enormous, would, in reality, be found incompetent to domestic circulation, were it not that a great part of our internal commerce is carried on by barter. For this reason, it is impossible, by pecuniary taxes, to raise a sum proportioned to the wants of the State. The money is no longer a general representative; and when it ceases to be so, the State ought to call for a portion of the thing represented; or, in other words, to tax in kind. This will greatly facilitate whatever plan of finance is adopted; because it will lessen the expenditures in cash, and make it the easier to retain what is drawn in.

I said the demand for foreign goods is less than it formerly was. I mean there is not a demand for so large a quantity, which the reasons already assigned clearly demonstrate; nor are the exorbitant rates now given any objection to this doctrine. There is an absolute scarcity even in comparison of the present consumption; and, of course, a demand for what there is. But should an importation of two millions sterling take place, the market would be glutted; and there would be no way of keeping up the price, but by making very slow sales. A less quan-

tity would stand no chance of calling in the money, and keeping it in long enough to effect any thing in favor of its credit.

I say nothing about the risk of importation. I do not believe we could obtain a convoy sufficient to justify our hazarding it without the precaution of insurance. But with this expedient we are safe; and must be satisfied with smaller profits for the sake of security.

This is a plan not altogether to be rejected. With prudent management it might enable us to carry on the war two or three years (which, perhaps, is as long as it may last); but if we should expect more from it, the restoration of the currency, we should be disappointed.

The only plan that can preserve the currency, is one that will make it the *immediate* interest of the moneyed men to co-operate with Government in its support. This country is in the same predicament in which France was previous to the famous Mississippi scheme, projected by Mr. Law. Its paper money, like ours, had dwindled to nothing; and no efforts of the Government could revive it, because the people had lost all confidence in its ability. Mr. Law, who had much more penetration than integrity, readily perceived, that no plan could succeed which did not unite the interest and credit of rich individuals with those of the State; and upon this, he framed the idea of his project, which, so far, agreed in principle with the Bank of England. The foundation was good, but the superstructure too vast. The proprietors aimed at unlimited wealth, and the Government itself expected too much; which was the cause of the ultimate miscarriage of the scheme, and of all the mischiefs that befel the kingdom in consequence.

It will be our wisdom to select what is good in this plan, and in any others that have gone before us; avoiding their defects and excesses. Something on a similar principle in America, will alone accomplish the restoration of paper credit, and establish a permanent fund for the future exigencies of Government.

Article I. The plan I would propose, is that of an American Bank, instituted by authority of Congress for ten years, under the denomination of The Bank of the United States.

II. A foreign loan makes a necessary part of the plan; but this I am persuaded we can obtain, if we pursue the proper measures. I shall suppose it to amount to two millions of pounds sterling. This loan to be thrown into the Bank as a part of its stock.

III. A subscription to be opened for two hundred millions of dollars; and the subscribers erected into a Company, to be called THE COMPANY OF THE BANK OF THE UNITED STATES.

IV. The Government to guarantee this subscription money to the proprietors, at the rate of one for twenty; that is, to engage, at the dissolution of the Bank, to make good to them the sum of ten millions of dollars, in lieu of the two hundred millions subscribed, payable in Spanish milled dollars, or a currency bona fide equivalent to them.

V. The taxes raised in money annually, to be thrown into stock.*

VI. All the remaining paper to be called in (at the option of the possessor), and bank notes issued in lieu of them, for so much sterling, payable to the bearer in three months from the date, at two per cent. per annum interest. A pound sterling to be estimated at two hundred and sixty-six and two-thirds of the present dollars.† The interest to be punctually paid in specie at the end of the three months; when it shall be at the choice of the possessor to have the bank notes renewed, or to receive the sum deposited, in the old paper.

VII. All the money issued from the Bank, to be of the same denomination, and on the same terms.‡

* The taxes are made to increase every year, for the three years; because the money in circulation increases, and, consequently, the people can afford to pay more.

† This is sixty paper dollars to one dollar of four shillings and sixpence sterling; which is the real value of the money. But if it is apprehended that this may meet with opposition, let the valuation of the bank notes be the same as the price of European Bills of Exchange. Other operations must be regulated accordingly.

‡ The reason of this is, to preserve the idea of a Stock, and make it seem that the old paper is still in existence. But there is danger, notwithstanding the reasons to the contrary, that there may be a run upon the bank, from particular causes, which may embarrass it. It is not probable the old paper will be entirely, though nearly, called out of circulation: what remains, will appreciate: this may

VIII. The Bank to furnish Congress with an annual loan of two millions sterling, if they have occasion for it, at four per cent. interest.

IX. The whole, or such part of the stock as is judged necessary, to be employed in commerce, in the manner, and on the terms, which shall be agreed upon, from time to time, between the Company, and a Board of Trade to be appointed by Congress.

X. The Bank to issue occasionally, by permission of Congress, such sums as may be thought safe and expedient, in private loans, on good securities, at six per cent. interest.

XI. The Government to share half the whole stock and profits of the Bank.

XII. The Bank to be managed by the trustees of the Company, under the inspection of the Board of Trade,* who may

tempt those who have bank notes, to demand payment on the terms of the original deposit; without considering that, by bringing too great a quantity again into circulation, it will again depreciate. The Bank may be pushed to a very disagreeable extremity by this means. I do not know whether it may not be advisable to confine the privilege of repayment to the lenders to the Bank, and make the bills bear interest, payable every three months, without making the principal demandable. Much may be said for and against. It is well worth consideration.

* This board ought immediately to be established, at all events. The Royal Council of Commerce, in France, and the subordinate Chambers in each province, form an excellent institution, and may, in many respects, serve as a model. Congress have too long neglected to organize a good scheme of administration, and throw public business into proper executive departments. For Commerce, I prefer a Board; but for most other things, single men. We want a Minister of War, a Minister of Foreign Affairs, a Minister of Finance, and a Minister of Marine. There is always more decision, more dispatch, more secrecy, more responsibility, where single men, than where bodies are concerned. By a plan of this kind, we should blend the advantages of a Monarchy and of a Republic, in a happy and beneficial union. Men will only devote their lives and attentions to the mastering a profession, on which they can build reputation and consequence which they do not share with others.

If this plan should be approved, Congress ought immediately to appoint a Minister of Finance, under whatsoever title they think proper, and charge him with its execution. He ought to be a man of ability, to comprehend it in all its consequences; and of eloquence, to make others comprehend and relish it. He ought, beside, to have some general knowledge of the science. This man ought immediately to address himself to some of the most sensible moneyed men; and

have recourse to the Company books whenever they think proper, to examine the state of its affairs. The same is done in England, and in other countries where Banks are established, and is a privilege which the Government has a right to demand for its own security. It is the more necessary in this case, from the commercial nature of the Bank.

To give an idea of the advantages

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which, having all the operation of money, and of a more advantageous kind than that which the lenders have parted with, will have all the efficacy of a payment. It is for this reason they are made to bear interest: and there can be no doubt, that every man will prefer a species of money which answers all the purposes of a currency, and even, when lying idle, brings in a profit to the possessor. The same consideration will prevent the lenders recalling the old paper, at the quarterly payments; because they hold a more valuable property instead of it. The interest is to be paid in specie, as a further temptation, for which a small sum will suffice. The denomination of the money is altered; because it will produce a useful illusion. Mankind are much led by sounds and appearances; and the currency having changed its name, will seem to have changed its nature.

The Bank will advance bills to the amount of two millions of pounds sterling to Congress; and, in addition to its stock, will

endeavor to convince them of the utility of the project. These must engage others, and so on, till a sufficient number is engaged.

Then Congress must establish the Bank, and set it agoing. I know of no man that has better pretensions than yourself; and I shall be very happy to hear that Congress have said, "Thou art the man."

I had like to have omitted one remark, which is, that the subscription money may be guaranteed, if necessary, at 10 to 1, as a greater inducement. This will only be twenty millions of dollars, or five millions of pounds sterling; a cheap bargain to get rid of the perplexities we labor under, and convert the torrent of ideal money into a moderate, but sufficient, stream, to supply the real wants of the State. Congress, no doubt, would be able to borrow enough abroad to pay this debt, if it should not find better means within itself. But I shall be much mistaken, if the proprietors will desire to be repaid, and not prefer continuing the loan to Government on reasonable terms.

now have a debt due it of this sum, which is to be considered as so much gained.

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Brought over, ...		7,075,000
To be deducted,		
Drawn out of circulation, by the sale of goods imported, ...	4,000,000	
By govermental taxes, supposed to be,	1,000,000	—5,000,000
Remaining in circulation the fourth year, .		£2,075,000

This will be less than the preceding, which is occasioned by the million supposed to be drawn in by taxes.

The national debt, on this plan, will stand thus, at the end of three years:

Foreign loan, ...	2,000,000
Domestic loan, at two millions per annum, .	6,000,000
Interest, at four per cent., ...	320,000
	8,320,000
Half the value of the Bank, ...	7,900,000
Balance against the United States, . . .	£420,000

We may therefore, by means of this establishment, carry on the war three years, and only incur a debt of four hundred and twenty thousand pounds over and above the guarantee of the subscription money; which, however, is not to be paid till the end of ten years.

I have said, in one place, that abstract calculations, in questions of finance, are not to be relied on: and as the complex operations of trade are involved in the present plan, I am, myself, diffident of those flattering results which it presents at every step. I am aware how apt the imagination is to be heated in projects of this nature, and to overlook the fallacies which often lurk in

first principles. But when I consider, on the other hand, that the scheme stands on the firm footing of public and private faith; that it links the interest of the State in an intimate connection with those of the rich individuals belonging to it; that it turns the wealth and influence of both into a commercial channel, for mutual benefit, which must afford advantages not to be estimated; that there is a defect of circulating medium, which this plan supplies, by a sort of creative power; converting what is so produced into a real and efficacious instrument of trade; I say, when I consider these things, and many more that might be added, I cannot forbear feeling a degree of confidence in the plan; and, at least, hoping that it is capable of being improved into something that will give relief to our finances.

I do not believe, that the advantages will be so great in fact, as they seem to be in speculation. They will be limited by the means of commerce which the States produce; and these may not be so extensive in the beginning as the plan supposes. Beside this, the profits of the commerce will not be so large, in proportion, after the first or second year, as during those years: neither will it be possible to increase the paper credit in the same degree. But the Bank of England is a striking example, how far this may be carried, when supported by public authority and private influence. On the other hand, a variety of secondary expedients may be invented, to enlarge the advantages of the bank. The whole system of annuities, as practised in England, may be ingrafted upon it, with such differences as are proper to accommodate it to our circumstances. The European loan may also be converted into a European Bank, the interests of which, being interwoven with the American Bank, may engage rich individuals there in promoting and extending the plan.

Very beneficial contracts may be made between Government and the Company, for supplying the army, by which money may be saved to the public, the army better furnished, and the profits of the bank extended.

I have confined the Bank to the space of ten years; because this will be long enough to judge of its advantages and disadvantages: and the latter may be rectified by giving it a new form.

I do not suppose it will ever be discontinued; because it seems to be founded on principles that must always operate well, and make it the interest, both of Government and the Company, to uphold it. But I suppose the plan capable of improvement, which experience will suggest.

I give one half of the whole property of the Bank to the United States; because it is not only just, but desirable to both parties. The United States contribute a great part of the stock; their authority is essential to the existence of the Bank; their credit is pledged for its support. The plan would ultimately fail, if the terms were too favorable to the Company, and too hard upon Government. It might be encumbered with a debt which it could never pay, and be obliged to take refuge in a bankruptcy. The share which the State has in the profits, will induce it to grant more ample privileges, without which the trade of the Company might often be under restrictions injurious to its success.

It is not, perhaps, absolutely necessary that the sum subscribed should be so considerable as I have stated it, though the larger the better. It is only necessary it should be considerable enough to engage a sufficient number of the principal moneyed men in the scheme. But Congress must take care to proportion the advantages they give and receive.

It may be objected, that this plan will be prejudicial to trade, by making the Government a party with a trading Company; which may be a temptation to arrogate exclusive privileges, and thereby fetter that spirit of enterprise and competition, on which the prosperity of commerce depends. But Congress may satisfy the jealousies on this head, by a solemn resolution not to grant exclusive privileges, which alone can make the objection valid. Large trading Companies must be beneficial to the commerce of a nation, when they are not invested with these, because they furnish a capital with which the most extensive enterprises may be undertaken. There is no doubt the establishment proposed would be very serviceable at this juncture, merely in a commercial view; for private adventurers are not a match for the numerous obstacles resulting from the present posture of affairs.

The present plan is the product of some reading on the subjects of commerce and finance, and of occasional reflections on our particular situation: but a want of leisure has prevented its being examined in so many lights, and digested so materially, as its importance requires. If the outlines are thought worthy of attention, and any difficulties occur which demand explanation: or if the plan be approved, and the further thoughts of the writer are desired; a letter directed to James Montague, Esquire, lodged in the post-office at Morristown, will be a safe channel of any communications you may think proper to make; and an immediate answer will be given. Though the writer has reasons which make him unwilling to be known; if a personal conference with him should be thought material, he will endeavor to comply.

You will consider this as a hasty production, and excuse the incorrectnesses with which it abounds.

I am, Sir, very respectfully,

Your most obedient and humble servant.

HAMILTON TO WASHINGTON.

Amboy, March 17, 1780.

Dear Sir:

I duly received your letter of the fourteenth, and shall not fail, in conjunction with General St. Clair, to attend to the military object of it. I am much obliged to your Excellency for the communication of your Southern advices. The enemy are still in the dark about their fleet and army gone that way, as we gather from the commissioners. They pretend to have little European news, though a vessel arrived two or three days since from England, after ten weeks passage. We send you some late New-York papers.

The commission has been several days at an end. The enemy, as was supposed, had no idea of treating on national ground. We are now in private conversation, and so far not

without hopes that the liberation of our prisoners will be effected on *admissible* terms. Two or three days more will probably put an end to the interview. General St. Clair and Colonel Carrington, beg their respects may be presented to your Excellency.

I have the honor to be,
Very respectfully and affectionately,
Your Excellency's most ob't servant,
ALEX. HAMILTON.

DU PORTAIL TO HAMILTON.

PHILADELPHIA, 21 March, 1780.

MON CHER COLONEL:

Quoique je compte partir pour le camp dans peu de jours, la crainte d' être encore retenu plus longtemps que jè ne voudrais, (comme je le suis depuis un mois), me fait prendre le parti de vous écrire quelque chose qui me semble d'une certaine importance que me concerne. Hier j'ais appris qu'il y a une quinzaine de jours hors de la nouvelle de l' arrivée des Anglais, une membre du Congrès Represanta dans le Congrès, qu'il serait àpropos de m'envoyer en Caroline avec la plus grande hâte. Il fonda sa demande sur les choses avantageuses qu'il avait entendu dire de moi, etc., etc. Il voulait que le Congrès me donnât sur le champ des ordres, et que je partisse sans délai. J'ignore quel est le membre qui â fait cette proposition, seulement je conjecture que c'est quelque delégué dés Etats du sud. On lui a répondu, que c'était au *Commandant-en-Chef* qu'il appartenait de faire une telle chose, que le Congrès ne pouvait pas savoir s'il n'avait pas quelque raison de me retenir à son Armée, quoique dans la circonstance présente, il parut effectivement que je serais plus utile au sud, en un mot *que l'attention avec la quelle le Commandant-en-Chef veillait au salut de l'état ne permettait pas de douter qu'il n'employât tous les moyens qui étaient en son pouvoir, et que les circonstances permettaient.*

Il est tres agréable, mon cher Colonel, d'etre le sujet d'une aussi belle phrase, mais je suis faché que la chose ait tourné

ainsi; je suis aussi très faché de n'avoir pas su tout cela dans le temps pour vous le mander. Car il était encore temps dors d'aller dans le sud; maintenant je ne sais plus que désirer. Cependant hier l'on nous débitait que des vaisseaux de transport servantes de vaisseaux de guerre étaient arrivées à New-York pour prendre des Renforts; si cela était si confirmé, il'y aurait apparence que les Anglais ne se proposaient pas de commencer leurs opérations avant l'arrivée de ces Renforts, alors ce serait peut être le cas d'y aller. Je laisse tout cela à faire à votre prudence, et à votre amitié, vous savez une partie des raisons que j'ai toujours eu et que j'ai encore de ne point faire de demande à ce sujet au Géneral Washington, mais vous savez aussi combien je désire d'aller au Caroline. S'il y'a quelque apparence que je puisse y arriver à temps, je ne vais pas d'inconvénient à ceque vous faisiez usage auprès du Géneral de ce qui c'est passé dans le Congrès, parceque plusieurs membres de Congrès l'ont déjà dit à différentes personnes.

(Si vous voulez ensuite que je vous parle comme à mon ami, je vous dirai que j'ai eu lieu de voir que de m'envoyer là bas, aurait fait un fort bon effet ici, surtout dans le commencement.)

Supposéz donc, que notre Géneral jugeât par des circonstances ultérieures qu'il peut encore être temps de m'y envoyer, comme il ne faut pas perdre un moment, il serait bon que je ne fusse pas obligé de retourner au camp. Pour cela il faudrait m'envoyer avec les ordres, toutes les lettres nécessaires pour le Géneral Lincoln et autres. Vous savez, mon cher Colonel, ce que je désire à cet égard. Si je vas la bas, il faut que mon arrivée soit comme un de ces accidens au théâtre qui reveille les spectateurs, et redonne de l'activité et de la chaleur à la pièce, vous m'entendez.

Je crois que dans ce cas le Géneral doit écrire au Congrès, outre les raisons qu'il a de m'envoyer pour le prier de me faire donner tous les moyens nécessaires pour faire diligence.

Enfin, prenez bien garde à ceci, mon cher Colonel, si vous m'envoyez des ordres, sitot que cela sera decidé, envoyez chercher Monsieur de l'Estaing, mon Aid-de-Camp, et dites lui s'il vous plaît de faire partir sur le champ ma malle et la sienne sur

un waggon du quartier maitre, s'il y en a qui partant sur le champ, sinon sur mon propre waggon: qu'il n'oublie pas surtout mes papiers. Il peut ensuite venir apres lui même et m'apporter les lettres du Géneral. Il faut qu'il fasse diligence; je ne puis partir sans différentes choses qui sont dans ma malle; qu'il se munisse lui même de ce qu'il lui faut. Mon adresse ici est: Mrs. Sword in Logan Alley, Second-street.

Je ne partirais point d'ici avant lundi prochain afin d'attendre votre réponse.

J'ai l'honneur d'être, mon cher Colonel,

Avec le plus parfait attachment,

Votre très humble et très obeissant servant,

DU PORTAIL.

Col. Hamilton.

SCHUYLER TO HAMILTON.

PHILADELPHIA, April 8, 1780.

DEAR SIR:

* * * * * * You have been mentioned in private conversation to go as Secretary to the Embassy at the Court of Versailles; there is but one obstacle which prevents me from making up my mind on the subject; that you will know when I have the pleasure of seeing you. In the mean time revolve the matter in yours.

The pride, the folly, and perhaps, too, the wickedness of some on a certain floor, combine to frustrate every intention to promote the public weal, and relieve my amiable Chief from his well-grounded anxiety; the few that feel for him, and are alarmed at the critical state of our public affairs, in every department, within as well as without, have not been able to carry a measure which they believed would have had salutary consequences. They have now proposed that a Committee should repair to head quarters, invested conjointly with the General, with a kind of dictatorial power, in order to afford satisfaction to the army, and to arrange the great departments thereof. Livingston, Els-

worth, and Matthews, are appointed to prepare Instructions. Some good may result, if gentlemen who love the General, are not jealous of the army, and of a generous turn are sent; but should General Sherman be at the head of the Triumviri, the General will be tormented with a thousand little propositions which Roger has thrown together, and which he entitles a System. I shall not be sent on this business, "because, it would not be proper to send a person who, as he has been in the army, will probably have a bias in its favor." This reasoning is conclusive.

Beware of communications to this quarter, which you would not wish the world to know; this hint will prevent you from writing but by a safe hand.

It is amusing to observe the effect Sir Harry Clinton's private No. 15 has. The Southernites have their spirits much raised by it. The Northerns look big, and the enemy's distress is owing to their virtue and exertions. They wish for the 12,000 Hessians to have the pleasure of devouring them. The war is to be at an end next winter, and as they wish to conclude handsomely, they will insist that their constituents complete their quotas without delay, and furnish aids of money, &c. En verité there are only two or three of the club who believe the letter spurious, but two who are decidedly of that opinion.

My best wishes to all at head quarters.

I am, dear Sir, sincerely yours,

PH. SCHUYLER.

Col. Hamilton.

HAMILTON TO BARON STEUBEN.

May 10, 1780.

DEAR BARON:

General Knox, in conversation, has observed to the General, that instead of sending to Philadelphia for the fifteen hundred arms mentioned in your letter of the sixth, and sending those here to that place to be fitted, it would be a great saving of ex-

pense, in the article of transportation, to have the bayonets and accoutrements brought on without the arms, and fitted to those now here; which can easily be done at the Park. The question is, if the arms here have no other defect than want of bayonets. The General will be glad to know what you think of General Knox's proposal. It seems to him eligible, unless there are reasons he is not acquainted with.

If there are any other articles you wish to have sent for (the General thinks you mentioned something of the kind to him), he will be glad to know what they are.

We have heard from the Marquis. He will be here at dinner. Will you dine with us also? The General requests it.

I have the honor to be, dear Baron,

Your very humble servant,

ALEX. HAMILTON, A. D. C.

HAMILTON TO DUANE.

May 14, 1780.

MY DEAR SIR:

This will be handed you by the Marquis, who brings us very important intelligence. The General communicates the substance of it in a private letter to you, and proposes a measure which all deem essential. For God's sake, my dear sir, engage Congress to adopt it, and come to a speedy decision. We have not a moment to lose. Were we to improve every instant of the interval, we should have too little time for what we have to do. The expected succor may arrive in the beginning of June, in all probability it will not be later than the middle. In the last case we have not a month to make our preparations in, and in this short period we must collect men, form magazines, and do a thousand things of as much difficulty as importance. The propriety of the measure proposed is so obvious, that an hour ought to decide it, and if any new members are to come, they ought to set out instantly with all expedition for head quarters.

Allow me, my dear sir, to give you a hint. The General will often be glad to consult the Committee on particular points, but it will be inexpedient that he should be obliged to do it oftener than he thinks proper, or any peculiar case may require. Their powers should be formed accordingly. It is the essence of many military operations, that they should be trusted to as few as possible.

The Marquis has a title to all the love of all America; but you know he has a thousand little whims to satisfy; one of these he *will have* me to write to some friend in Congress about. He is desirous of having the Captain of the frigate in which he came complimented; and gives several pretty instances of his punctuality and disinterestedness. He wishes Congress to pass some resolutions of thanks, and to recommend him to their Minister in France, to be recommended to the French Court. The first of these is practicable. The last I think might have an officious appearance. The *essential* services the Marquis has rendered America in France, give him a claim for all that can be done with propriety; but Congress must not commit themselves.

Again, my dear sir, I must entreat you to use the spur on the present occasion. The fate of America is perhaps suspended on the issue; if we are found unprepared, it must disgrace us in the eyes of all Europe, besides defeating the good intentions of our allies, and losing the happiest opportunity we ever have had to save ourselves. Adieu, my dear Sir.

Believe me to be, with the truest respect and affection,

Your most obed't servant,

A. HAMILTON.

Hon. James Duane, Philadelphia.

Honored by Marquis De Lafayette.

HAMILTON TO BARON STEUBEN.

June 7, 1780.

DEAR BARON:

I am commanded by the General to inform you, that the enemy are out in considerable force; and, by the last advice, were advancing this way. We are going to meet them. The General is just set out for Chatham, and will be happy to meet you there.

Yours, respectfully,

A. HAMILTON, A. D. C.

HAMILTON TO WASHINGTON.

June 8, 1780.

SIR:

I have seen the enemy. Those in view I calculate at about three thousand: there may be, and probably enough are, others out of sight. They have sent all their horse to the other side, except about fifty or sixty. Their baggage, it is agreed on all hands, has also been sent across, and their wounded. It is not ascertained that any of their infantry have passed to the other side. There are four or five hundred on the opposite point; but it is uncertain whether they are those who went from this side, or those who were on Staten Island. I rather suppose the former.

Different conjectures may be made. The present movement may be calculated to draw us down and betray us into an action. They may have desisted from their intention of passing till night, for fear of our falling upon their rear. I believe this is the case: for as they have but few boats, it would certainly be a delicate manœuvre to cross in our face. We are taking measures to watch their motions to-night, as closely as possible. An incessant but *very light* skirmishing. Very few boats, not more than enough to carry three or four hundred men at a time. It is likely more will come down this evening.

I have the honor to be,

Your Excellency's most obedient servant,

ALEX. HAMILTON.

HAMILTON TO CHEVALIER DE TERNAY.

Au Cap Henry, le 13 Juin, 1780.

Monsieur le Chevalier:

Je suis envoyé par le Général Washington au Cap Henry pour y attendre votre escadre et vous remettre ainsi qu' à Monsieur le Comte de Rochambau, les dépêches de Monsieur le Marquis de La Fayette—ces dépêches, Monsieur le Chevalier, contiennent le plan d'opérations que le Général Washington a l'honneur de vous proposer, la situation des ennemies et la nôtre relativement aux forces respectives des deux parties, aux points occupés, aux moyens de subsistance et cetéra; tous les changemens qui pouvraient survenir sur ces objets doivent m' être communiqués, afin qu' à votre arrivée vous puissiez avoir sous les yeux le plus de données possibles. Les mêmes détails vous attendent á Rhode Island, et si vous ne devez les reçevoir qu' après être arrivé, il est presque indifférent, Monsieur le Chevalier, que votre escadre atterisse à Rhode Island ou au Cap Henry; mais il y a des circonstances qui, si elles vous étaient connues tendraient peut être à vous déterminer plustôt pour l'un de ces points que pour l'autre, ou méme pour un troisième point que vos instructions n'ont pu prévoir. C'est pour vous rendre compte de ces circonstances que jè saisis l'occasion du fier Rodrique; heureux si, dans une conjoncture où les moments sont d'une si grande importance, cette lettre peut anticiper de quelques jours vos dispositions.

1°. Par le plan proposé à vous, Monsieur le Chevalier, et à Monsieur le Comte de Rochambau, les efforts combinés de l'armée Française et Americaine doivent se porter sur New-York, et vous êtes instamment prié de vous rendre immédiatement à Sandy Hook.

2°. Suivant les informations qui m' ont été récemment fournies par le Gouverneur de la Virginie, la ville de Charlestown est prise; les ennemis embarquent une partie des troupes qui en ont fait la Conquête, et d'après la certitude où nous sommes que la destination de votre escadre leur est connue, il semble que cet

embarquement pourrait bien avoir pour objet de renforcer la garnison de New-York.

3°. La somme de leurs forces navales sur ce continent se borne à trois vaisseaux de ligne, un de 50 canons, deux de 44, et quelques fregates à Charlestown; un vaisseau de 74 et quelques fregates, sortis de New-York depuis trois semaines et dont nous ignorons la destination.

Ainsi, Monsieur le Chevalier, la première de ces considérations vous invite à Sandy Hook; la seconde réclame votre atterrage sur un point d'où vous puissiez être en mesure d'intercepter les Secours destinés pour New-York, et la troisième vous offre un terme de comparaison entre la plus grande force qui puisse escorter ces secours, et cette avec laquelle vous pouvez les attaquer. Il est encore à observer qu' excepté les trois vaisseaux de ligne, tous les autres (à Charlestown) sont dans le port, et que les plus gros n'en peuvent sortir, qu âprès avoir été alégés, et avec la concurrence d'une haute marrée et d'un vent propice.

Telles sont, Monsieur le Chevalier, les choses dont ma mission a pour objet de vous rendre compte, et comme il est de toute importance que ces informations vous parviennent le plus tôt possible, j'ai cru ne pas devoir négliger la probabilité, qui s'offre de les faire dévancer votre arrivée.

En supposant, Monsieur le Chevalier, que le fier Rodrique vous rencontre et que vous jugiez à propos de vous rendre en droiture à Sandy Hook, il est un moyen de faire que les dépeches qui vous attendent à Rhode Island et du Cap Henry vous parviennent aussi promptement qui si vous aviez atterri à l'un de ces deux points: ce serait de dépécher, vers l'un ou l'autre, l'un de vos plus legers vaisseaux qui recevrait à son bord l'officier chargé de ces dépêches, et vous irait rejoindre vers Sandy Hook, où vraisemblablement il se rendrait aussitôt que votre flotte, ou du moins beaucoup plustot que les réponses de Général Washington ou de Monsieur le Marquis de La Fayette, aux lettres qui leur annonceraient votre arrivée.

Si le Cap Henry etait le point choisi, j'oserais vous prier, Monsieur le Chevalier, afin d'éviter tous délais, d'ordonner qu'à la vue, du signal que vous savez, le vaisseau y réponde par un

signal contraire, je veux dire en avertissant la position des pavillons; qu'il envoie sa chaloupe à terre avec un officier muni des mots de reconnaissance; que cet officier me donne la première partie de ces mots et reçoive de moi la seconde. Par là je crois, Monsieur le Chevalier, que toute possibilité de surprise est sauvée, de part et d'autre, sans qu'il y ait un seul instant de perdre par le Cérémonial de la reconnaissance.

Je suis, &c. &c. &c.

A. HAMILTON.

A Monsieur le Chevalier de Ternay.

HAMILTON TO BARON STEUBEN.

WHIPPANY, June 25, 1780.

DEAR BARON:

The enemy, the day before yesterday, made a forward movement to Springfield, which they burnt, and retired to Elizabethtown Point. The same evening they crossed over to Staten Island; and there are a great many concurring circumstances which make it probable we shall next hear of them on the North River. As you are at West Point, the General wishes you to remain there until the present appearances come to some result. He has confidence in your judgment, and wishes you to give your advice and assistance to the commanding officer. As you have no command in the post, you can only do this in a private friendly way: but I dare say General Howe will be happy to consult you. You will consider this as a private letter, in which I rather convey you the General's wishes than his commands.

All the army is in march toward you, and will be at Pompton this evening.

I have the honor to be,

Very respectfully and affectionately,

Your humble servant,

ALEX. HAMILTON.

HAMILTON TO BARON STEUBEN.

HEAD-QUARTERS, RAMAPO, June 30, 1780.

Agreeably to your request, my dear Baron, I communicated your project to the General. Happily the inactivity of the enemy has given us time to make dispositions which render the calling out of the militia unnecessary; and the whole has been accordingly countermanded.

The General requests that when you have completed the object of your errand in your department, and put things in train, you will rejoin the army.

I wrote you a line from Whippany, of which you made no mention.

I have the honor to be, yours,

A. H.

HAMILTON TO BARON STEUBEN.

HEAD-QUARTERS, July 23, 1780.

I have received, my dear Baron, your two letters of the sixteenth and eighteenth. On the formation of the Light Infantry, the General has already written to you. I presume it will be, ultimately, nearly as you have proposed.

Smith set out, some days since, to join you. Bradford, I am told, is undecided about entering into the office. Col. Scammel has promised to bring him to me; and if he accepts, we will forward him. I believe Prescott will be appointed in the Light Infantry. *Entre nous,* 'tis not easy to find good Majors for this corps in the Massachusetts Line; and as it will act a good deal with the French troops, we wish it (for this additional reason) to be well officered. Prescott will answer the purpose: but he is not yet to know that he is in contemplation. We shall not long continue in our present position. The distinctions of departments are an old story, which now do not exist except with re-

spect to South Carolina. You are with a detachment of the main army.

I dare say all you are doing will be found right. I shall join my *beau-pere* to save you from the cord. The arrangement for your department was unfortunately sent to Congress soon after you went from here; with the most pressing instances to determine upon it without delay. We have heard nothing of it since. We have repeated our *prayers* and *exhortations*. If we get no answer in three or four days, we must determine for ourselves.

Major Francis is returned from Philadelphia; but I have not seen him since the arrival of your letters. I will move the inquiry you wish, when I see him. Can you do any thing for him in your department?

A severe stroke upon us, is, that our arms, expected from France, are not arrived. I do not know how we shall be able to arm our recruits.

Graves sailed from the Hook the nineteenth. We had been playing off and on two days.

Adieu, my dear Baron, and believe me always, with the most respectful attachment,

Your humble servant,

A. H.

BAUMAN TO HAMILTON.

West Point, August 13, 1780.

Dear Sir:

I cannot help laying before you a few of my thoughts, which lately have engrossed my whole attention, on the review of our changeable government at West Point. However, I hope you will make no other use of them but such as may be of advantage; and whatever may be improper, or improperly stated, impute to my inability only: and there you will please to let it rest, and take in good part what I shall say, as it proceeds from a zeal of affection to you, and from a regard to the cause I am engaged in. On this consideration you will excuse me, if any

where I should seem to exceed those bounds which custom has prescribed to subalterns, when they treat of any thing, or adopt modes, to their superiors.

A continual change of commanding officers, or commandants, is, in my humble opinion, injurious to this post, and hurtful to the military duty, so absolutely requisite to be performed, and preserved in a garrison. As there is no nation at war which pursues the like mode excepting us; I am therefore induced, not only from this consideration, but from weighty experience during my station at this post, to offer an opinion of its impropriety, and bad consequences. The visible ill it creates; the damage to innumerable things; the irregularity it continually causes; and lastly, the total loss of the many thousands which have been, and daily are, expended on this national fabric, which inevitably must fall to pieces, unless an officer is fixed to this post (and who ought to be a competent judge of fortifications, and a military man), are matters which, I think, demand consideration.

A Town-Major, and a good Barrack-Master, are as necessary here, as the necessaries of life are. The former to regulate the duty and to keep up discipline in this jurisdiction: the latter to take care of the buildings, which must otherwise be destroyed. The next thing which falls to our attention, is the public provision, which has been, and daily is, exposed here to be lost, to be stolen, and to be damaged, for want of sufficient shelter and proper repositories. The troops have suffered, and still suffer, from these and other causes. They have been cheated in weights, in measure, and in their scanty allowance of fatigue rum; which I can attest, by being appointed, after my having represented the matter to General M'Dougall, to inspect into some of those abuses. Notwithstanding the many thousands of boards which came here, there are not sufficient for barracks, bunks, etc. For as fast as one thing is built up, another is torn down again. There is not, in all this garrison, a proper guard-house for the conveniency of soldiers, nor for the security of the criminals. No powder magazine, nor a store for the reception and reserve of the implements of war. In short, the whole appears, at present, under the care of ungovernable and undis-

ciplined militia, like a wild Tartar's camp, instead of that shining fortification all America thinks not only an insurmountable barrier against the incursion of its enemy, but likewise an easy defence in case of an unforeseen disaster of its army.

However, to return to my subject. The importance of those heads already mentioned, and their connection with those preceding, will, I hope, obtain your pardon for the digression into which they have led me; and to your discretion I shall leave what I state.

In a letter I wrote to General Knox some time last winter, among many things I had to say concerning the ordnance and myself, I made this remark, to wit: "That relieving of an officer from a garrison, is not like a relief in the field: for an officer who knows himself to be relieved, will leave many things undone for the next to do; which I have seen, heard, and experienced. Beside, after once every thing is to rights, the men then ought to desist from labor, and exercise the guns. But new commanding officers have chiefly new systems of defence, which add labor to labor, and nothing will be formed systematically."

I have already stated these and more things minutely to the general officers here, who all agreed in their validity and propriety. But they, being all liable to immediate removal, there cannot be any thing formed into a permanent and regular system. Moreover, I have been informed, that owing to the mismanagement of their predecessors, they were obliged, after they had taken the command, to hunt for materials in order to build their own systems; and to issue orders upon orders, to acquaint themselves with those persons who have, as it were, in keeping, the several branches which flow into this department.

And let me once more, in confidence, assure you, that I suffer incessant pain from the sad state this garrison is in. To rectify defects, my dear sir, when roused to arms, can never be attainable. Therefore let me beg you to assist in adopting some plan which may be soldierly, for the good of the service: which, however, can be done in no other manner, but such as I have hinted to you. For let General Arnold have all the sagacity imaginable, it will take him some time to get himself well

acquainted with the position and defence of this post; especially as there is not one single Continental officer left here who can in any way assist him. Every thing seems new here; and the very engineer is transferred from hence, on whom he, in some measure, could have depended for information, with regard to the weakest and strongest parts of this fortress. And I have not yet told you the one hundredth part of what I have to say upon some of these subjects; but I shall finish with prognosticating, that should ever capriciousness hold sway here, it may prove fatal to this post.

I am, with due respect, Sir,
Your most humble servant,
S. BAUMAN,
Major of Artillery.

DE MARBOIS TO HAMILTON.

PHILADELPHIA, 21 Aout, 1780.

Je viens de recevoir mon cher Colonel votre lettre du 17 de ce mois. Vous m'y parlez de mes Frères comme si vous etiez sur qu'ils sont en effet prissonniers. Avez-vous sur cet article plus de connaissance que je n'en ai, on m'avez vous déjà écrit à ce sujet quelque lettre qui ne me serait point parvenue. Je vais écrire à M. de Ternay à ce sujet, mais en attendence je vous prie de vouloir bien me communiquer tous les éclaircissements que vous aurez pu vous procurer, et 'dêtre persuadé que rien ne me touche plus que de leur procurer de soulagement s'ils sont en effet entre les mains de l'ennemi.

Si vous avez quelques nouvelles dernières touchant l'embarcation que M. le Général Clinton prépare, je vous prie de vouloir bien m'en instruire, cet article étant de la plus grande importance pour nous. Je vous embrasse de tout mon cœur.

DE MARBOIS.

Col. Hamilton.

WILLIAMS TO HAMILTON.

HILLSBOROUGH, August 30, 1780.

DEAR HAMILTON:

About the twenty-third instant, I wrote my friend Harrison from Salisbury, giving him a very hasty particular account of the defeat of General Gates's army at Sutton's, near Campden, the sixteenth instant. We were truly unfortunate, and completely routed. The infamous cowardice of the militia of Virginia and North Carolina, gave the enemy every advantage over our few regular troops, whose firm opposition and gallant behavior have gained them the applause, as well of our successful foes, as of our runaway friends. If I mentioned to Col. Harrison the loss of two howitzers, I was mistaken. We had eight pieces of light artillery, with six ammunition wagons, which, with the greatest part of our baggage, were lost.

Our retreat was the most mortifying that could have happened. Those who escaped the dangers of the field, knew not where to find protection: the wounded found no relief from the inhabitants, who were immediately in arms against us; and many of our fugitive officers and men were disarmed by those faithless villains, who had flattered us with promises of joining us against the enemy. The tories are now assembling in different parts of the country; and there is actually a sort of partisan war waged between them and the whigs of this country.

The greatest part of our baggage was plundered by those who first left the field. The enemy took a part; and much of what escaped them, has been pillaged by the inhabitants on the retreat. The wagon horses have been stolen, and frequently taken from the drivers; and some of those desperate rascals have been daring enough to fire upon parties of our regular troops many miles from the place of action.

General Gates used the utmost expedition in getting from the lost field to this place. As this step is unaccountable to me, you must expect to know the reason another time, and from better authority. An unfortunate General usually loses the con-

fidence of his army; and this is much the case with us at present. However, I suppose every thing necessary will be done, in justification of the steps that have been taken, and then all will be understood. Beside my ignorance, there is another reason for my silence on this subject. The General is extremely mortified at the disappointment his hopes have met with; and I think it ungenerous to oppress dejected spirits by a premature censure.

The legislature of this State is now sitting at this place, and devising means of defending the country. The General has exhibited estimates (he informs me) of the supplies wanting to carry on the campaign, both to the legislature of this State, and to Virginia; and hopes they will be furnished. The officers of North Carolina talk confidently of re-embodying a great number of militia. General Stephens had collected about eight hundred of the Virginia militia at this place since the action. But I am sorry to add, at least half that number have deserted. The Maryland Division, including the Delaware regiment, will, I hope, muster six hundred when all are collected. Part are now here: a party are with General Smallwood at Ellis's Ferry, Adkin river; and a small party with Major Anderson, who General Smallwood left some time at Charlotte, to receive the fugitives as they arrived. But this is the place of general rendezvous.

From the best accounts I can get, Lord Cornwallis had with him, on the day of battle, the seventy-first, sixty-third, thirty-third, and twenty-third British regiments; a corps of Hessians, Tarlton's legion, and some new levies, amounting to about three thousand men. Our numbers were very little greater; and our force will not be imagined so great, by those who are informed of our long march in a barren country, with very little other subsistence than a short allowance of fresh beef, green corn, apples, and peaches.

As soon as I recover from a relaxation of spirits, which is all my present complaint, I will write you again, and inform you that we are resolved not to despair, but bear our fortunes like veterans in the South; while you, like heroes in the North, win and wear the laurels of the present campaign.

Present my most respectful compliments to the General, whom I love; to all my friends at head quarters and in camp. Not a man among you have been generous enough to write a single sentence to

Your sincere friend and servant,
O. H. WILLIAMS.

I mentioned the surprise of General Sumpter's party, which happened the sixteenth instant, in my last.

HAMILTON TO JAMES DUANE.

LIBERTY POLE, September 3, 1780.

DEAR SIR:

Agreeably to your request, and my promise, I sit down to give you my ideas of the defects of our present system, and the changes necessary to save us from ruin. They may, perhaps, be the reveries of a projector, rather than the sober views of a politician. You will judge of them, and make what use you please of them.

The fundamental defect is a want of power in Congress. It is hardly worth while to show in what this consists, as it seems to be universally acknowledged; or to point out how it has happened, as the only question is how to remedy it. It may, however, be said, that it has originated from three causes; an excess of the spirit of liberty, which has made the particular States show a jealousy of all power not in their own hands; and this jealousy has led them to exercise a right of judging in the last resort of the measures recommended by Congress, and of acting according to their own opinions of their propriety, or necessity; a diffidence, in Congress, of their own powers, by which they have been timid and indecisive in their resolutions: constantly making concessions to the States, till they have scarcely left themselves the shadow of power; a want of sufficient means at their disposal to answer the public exigencies, and of vigor to draw forth those means; which have occasioned them to depend on the

States individually, to fulfil their engagements with the army; the consequence of which, has been to ruin their influence and credit with the army, to establish its dependence on each State separately, rather than *on them*, that is, rather than on the whole collectively.

It may be pleaded, that Congress had never any definite powers granted them, and, of course, could exercise none, could do nothing more than recommend. The manner in which Congress was appointed, would warrant, and the public good required, that they should have considered themselves as vested with full power *to preserve the republic from harm.* They have done many of the highest acts of sovereignty, which were always cheerfully submitted to: The declaration of independence; the declaration of war: the levying of an army; creating a navy; emitting money; making alliances with foreign powers; appointing a dictator, etc., etc. All these implications of a complete sovereignty were never disputed, and ought to have been a standard for the whole conduct of administration. Undefined powers are discretionary powers, limited only by the object for which they were given; in the present case, the independence and freedom of America. The Confederation made no difference; for as it has not been generally adopted, it had no operation. But from what I recollect of it, Congress have even descended from the authority which the spirit of that act gives them; while the particular States have no further attended to it, than as it suited their pretensions and convenience. It would take too much time to enter into particular instances, each of which separately might appear inconsiderable; but united, are of serious import. I only mean to remark, not to censure.

But the Confederation itself is defective, and requires to be altered. It is neither fit for war nor peace. The idea of an uncontrollable sovereignty, in each State, over its internal police, will defeat the other powers given to Congress, and make our union feeble and precarious. There are instances without number, where Acts, necessary for the general good, and which rise out of the powers given to Congress, must interfere with the internal police of the States; and there are as many instances in

which the particular States, by arrangements of internal police, can effectually, though indirectly, counteract the arrangements of Congress. You have already had examples of this, for which I refer you to your own memory.

The Confederation gives the States, individually, too much influence in the affairs of the army. They should have nothing to do with it. The entire formation and disposal of our military forces, ought to belong to Congress. It is an essential cement of the union: and it ought to be the policy of Congress, to destroy all ideas of State attachments in the army, and make it look up wholly to them. For this purpose, all appointments, promotions, and provisions, whatsoever, ought to be made by them. It may be apprehended that this may be dangerous to liberty. But nothing appears more evident to me, than that we run much greater risk of having a weak and disunited federal government, than one which will be able to usurp upon the rights of the people.

Already some of the lines of the army would obey their States in opposition to Congress, notwithstanding the pains we have taken to preserve the unity of the army. If any thing would hinder this, it would be the personal influence of the General; a melancholy and mortifying consideration.

The forms of our State constitutions, must always give them great weight in our affairs, and will make it too difficult to bend them to the pursuit of a common interest; too easy to oppose whatever they do not like: and to form partial combinations subversive of the general one. There is a wide difference between our situation, and that of an empire under one simple form of government, distributed into counties, provinces, or districts, which have no legislatures, but merely magistratical bodies, to execute the laws of a common sovereign. Here the danger is, that the sovereign will have too much power, and oppress the parts of which it is composed. In our case, that of an empire composed of confederated States; each with a government completely organized within itself, having all the means to draw its subjects to a close dependence on itself; the danger is directly the reverse. It is, that the common sovereign will not have power sufficient

to unite the different members together, and direct the common forces to the interest and happiness of the whole.

The leagues among the old Grecian republics are a proof of this. They were continually at war with each other; and, for want of union, fell a prey to their neighbors. They frequently held general councils; but their resolutions were no further observed, than as they suited the interests and inclinations of all the parties; and, at length, they sunk entirely into contempt.

The Swiss Cantons are another proof of the doctrine. They have had wars with each other, which would have been fatal to them, had not the different powers, in their neighborhood, been too jealous of one another, and too equally matched, to suffer either to take advantage of their quarrels. That they have remained so long united at all, is to be attributed to their weakness, to their poverty, and to the causes just mentioned. These ties will not exist in America; a little time hence, some of the States will be powerful empires; and we are so remote from other nations, that we shall have all the leisure and opportunity we can wish, to cut each other's throats.

The Germanic corps might also be cited as an example in favor of the position.

The United Provinces may be thought to be one against it. But the family of the Stadtholders, whose authority is interwoven with the whole Government, has been a strong link of union between them. Their physical necessities, and the habits founded upon them, have contributed to it.

Each province is too inconsiderable, by itself, to undertake any thing. An analysis of their present constitutions, would show that they have many ties which would not exist in ours; and that they are by no means a proper model for us.

Our own experience should satisfy us. We have felt the difficulty of drawing out the resources of the country, and inducing the States to combine in equal exertions for the common cause.

The ill success of our last attempt is striking. Some have done a great deal; others little, or scarcely any thing. The disputes about boundaries, etc., testify how flattering a prospect we have of future tranquillity, if we do not frame, in time, a con-

federacy capable of deciding the differences, and compelling the obedience of the respective members.

The Confederation, too, gives the power of the purse too entirely to the State Legislatures. It should provide perpetual funds, in the disposal of Congress, by a land tax, poll tax, or the like. All imposts upon commerce ought to be laid by Congress, and appropriated to their use. For, without certain revenues, a Government can have no power. That power which holds the purse-strings absolutely, must rule. This seems to be a medium which, without making Congress altogether independent, will tend to give reality to its authority.

Another defect in our system, is want of method and energy in the administration. This has partly resulted from the other defect; but in a great degree from prejudice, and the want of a proper executive. Congress have kept the power too much in their own hands, and have meddled too much with details of every sort. Congress is, properly, a deliberative corps; and it forgets itself when it attempts to play the executive. It is impossible such a body, numerous as it is, constantly fluctuating, can ever act with sufficient decision, or with system. Two-thirds of the members, one half the time, cannot know what has gone before them, or what connection the subject in hand has to what has been transacted on former occasions. The members who have been more permanent, will only give information that promotes the side they espouse in the present case; and will as often mislead as enlighten. The variety of business must distract; and the proneness of every assembly to debate, must at all times delay.

Lately, Congress, convinced of these inconveniences, have gone into the measure of appointing Boards. But this is, in my opinion, a bad plan.

A single man, in each department of the administration, would be greatly preferable. It would give us a chance of more knowledge, more activity, more responsibility, and, of course, more zeal and attention. Boards partake of a part of the inconveniences of larger assemblies. Their decisions are slower, their energy less, their responsibility more diffused. They will not

have the same abilities and knowledge as an administration by single men. Men of the first pretensions will not so readily engage in them; because they will be less conspicuous, of less importance, have less opportunity of distinguishing themselves. The members of Boards will take less pains to inform themselves and arrive to eminence, because they have fewer motives to do it. All these reasons conspire to give a preference to the plan of vesting the great executive departments of the State in the hands of individuals. As these men will be, of course, at all times under the direction of Congress, we shall blend the advantages of a Monarchy and Republic in our constitution.

A question has been made, whether single men could be found to undertake these offices. I think they could; because there would be then every thing to excite the ambition of candidates. But, in order to this, Congress, by their manner of appointing them, and the line of duty marked out, must show that they are in earnest in making these officers, officers of real trust and importance.

I fear a little vanity has stood in the way of these arrangements, as though they would lessen the importance of Congress, and leave them nothing to do. But they would have precisely the same rights and powers as heretofore, happily disencumbered of the detail. They would have to inspect the conduct of their ministers, deliberate upon their plans, originate others for the public good; only observing this rule: that they ought to consult their ministers, and get all the information and advice they could from them, before they entered into any new measures, or made changes in the old.

A third defect is, the fluctuating constitution of our army. This has been a pregnant source of evil: all our military misfortunes, three-fourths of our civil embarrassments, are to be ascribed to it. The General has so fully enumerated the mischiefs of it, in a letter of the , to Congress, that I could only repeat what he has said, and will therefore refer you to that letter.

The imperfect and unequal provision made for the army, is a fourth defect, which you will find delineated in the same letter. Without a speedy change, the army must dissolve. It is now a

mob, rather than an army; without clothing, without pay, without provision, without morals, without discipline. We begin to hate the country for its neglect of us. The country begin to hate us for our oppressions of them. Congress have long been jealous of us. We have now lost all confidence in them, and give the worst construction to all they do. Held together by the slenderest ties, we are ripening for a dissolution.

The present mode of supplying the army, by State purchases, is not one of the least considerable defects of our system. It is too precarious a dependence; because the States will never be sufficiently impressed with our necessities. Each will make its own ease a primary object; the supply of the army a secondary one. The variety of channels through which the business is transacted, will multiply the number of persons employed, and the opportunities of embezzling public money. From the popular spirit on which most of the Governments turn, the State agents will be men of less character and ability: nor will there be so rigid a responsibility among them, as there might easily be among those in the employ of the Continent; of course, not so much diligence, care, or economy. Very little of the money raised in the several States, will go into the Continental treasury, on pretence, that it is all exhausted in providing the quotas of supplies; and the public will be without funds for the other demands of Government. The expense will be ultimately much greater, and the advantages much smaller. We actually feel the insufficiency of this plan; and have reason to dread, under it, a ruinous extremity of want.

These are the principal defects, in the present system, that now occur to me. There are many inferior ones, in the organization of particular departments, and many errors of administration, which might be pointed out; but the task would be troublesome and tedious: and if we had once remedied those I have mentioned, the others would not be attended with much difficulty.

I shall now propose the remedies, which appear to me applicable to our circumstances, and necessary to extricate our affairs from their present deplorable situation.

The first step must be, to give Congress powers competent to the public exigencies. This may happen in two ways: one, by resuming and exercising the discretionary powers I suppose to have been originally vested in them, for the safety of the States; and resting their conduct on the candor of their countrymen, and the necessity of the conjuncture: the other, by calling immediately a Convention of all the States, with full authority to conclude finally upon a General Confederation; stating to them, beforehand, explicitly, the evils arising from a want of power in Congress, and the impossibility of supporting the contest on its present footing; that the delegates may come, possessed of proper sentiments, as well as proper authority, to give efficacy to the meeting. Their commission should include a right of vesting Congress with the whole, or a proportion, of the unoccupied lands, to be employed for the purpose of raising a revenue: reserving the jurisdiction to the States by whom they are granted.

The first plan, I expect, will be thought too bold an expedient, by the generality of Congress; and, indeed, their practice hitherto, has so riveted the opinion of their want of power, that the success of this experiment may very well be doubted.

I see no objection to the other mode, that has any weight, in competition with the reasons for it. The Convention should assemble the first of November next. The sooner the better. Our disorders are too violent to admit of a common or lingering remedy. The reasons for which I require them to be vested with plenipotentiary authority, are, that the business may suffer no delay in the execution; and may, in reality, come to effect. A Convention may agree upon a Confederation: the States, individually, hardly ever will. We must have one at all events, and a vigorous one, if we mean to succeed in the contest, and be happy hereafter. As I said before, to engage the States to comply with this mode, Congress ought to confess to them, plainly and unanimously, the impracticability of supporting our affairs on the present footing, and without a solid coercive union. I ask, that the Convention should have a power of vesting the whole, or a part, of the unoccupied lands in Congress; because it is necessary that body should have some property, as a fund for the

arrangements of finance; and I know of no other kind that can be given them.

The Confederation, in my opinion, should give Congress complete sovereignty; except as to that part of internal police, which relates to the rights of property and life among individuals, and to raising money by internal taxes. It is necessary that every thing belonging to this, should be regulated by the State legislatures. Congress should have complete sovereignty in all that relates to war, peace, trade, finance; and to the management of foreign affairs; the right of declaring war; of raising armies, officering, paying them, directing their motions in every respect; of equipping fleets, and doing the same with them; of building fortifications, arsenals, magazines, etc., etc.; of making peace on such conditions as they think proper; of regulating trade, determining with what countries it shall be carried on; granting indulgencies; laying prohibitions on all the articles of export, or import; imposing duties; granting bounties and premiums for raising, exporting, or importing, and applying to their own use, the product of these duties; only giving credit to the States on whom they are raised, in the general account of revenues and expenses; instituting Admiralty Courts, etc.; of coining money; establishing Banks on such terms, and with such privileges, as they think proper; appropriating funds, and doing whatever else relates to the operations of finance; transacting every thing with foreign nations; making alliances, offensive and defensive; treaties of commerce, etc., etc.

The Confederation should provide certain perpetual revenues, productive, and easy of collection; a land tax, poll tax, or the like; which, together with the duties on trade, and the unlocated lands, would give Congress a substantial existence, and a stable foundation for their schemes of finance. What more supplies were necessary, should be occasionally demanded of the States, in the present mode of quotas.

The second step I would recommend, is, that Congress should instantly appoint the following great officers of State. A Secretary for Foreign Affairs, a President of War, a President of Marine, a Financier, a President of Trade. Instead of this

last, a Board of Trade may be preferable, as the regulations of trade are slow and gradual; and require prudence and experience more than other qualities; for which Boards are very well adapted.

Congress should choose for these offices, men of the first abilities, property, and character, in the Continent; and such as have had the best opportunities of being acquainted with the several branches. General Schuyler, whom you mentioned, would make an excellent President of War; General M'Dougall a very good President of Marine. Mr. Robert Morris would have many things in his favor for the department of finance. He could, by his own personal influence, give great weight to the measures he should adopt. I dare say men, equally capable, may be found for the other departments.

I know not if it would not be a good plan to let the Financier be President of the Board of Trade; but he should only have a casting voice in determining questions there. There is a connection between trade and finance, which ought to make the director of one acquainted with the other; but the Financier should not direct the affairs of trade, because, for the sake of acquiring reputation by increasing the revenues, he might adopt measures that would depress trade. In what relates to finance, he should be alone.

These officers should have nearly the same powers and functions as those in France analogous to them: and each should be Chief in his department; with subordinate Boards, composed of assistants, clerks, etc., to execute his orders.

In my opinion, a plan of this kind would be of inconceivable utility to our affairs: its benefits would be very speedily felt. It would give new life and energy to the operations of Government. Business would be conducted with dispatch, method, and system. A million of abuses, now existing, would be corrected; and judicious plans would be formed and executed for the public good.

Another step of immediate necessity, is, to recruit the army for the war, or at least for three years. This must be done by a mode similar to that which is practised in Sweden. There the

inhabitants are thrown into classes of sixteen; and when the sovereign wants men, each of these classes must furnish one. They raise a fixed sum of money; and if one of the class is willing to become a soldier, he receives the money and offers himself a volunteer. If none is found to do this, a draught is made; and he on whom the lot falls, receives the money, and is obliged to serve.

The minds of the people are prepared for a thing of this kind. The heavy bounties they have been obliged to pay for men to serve a few months, must have disgusted them with this mode, and made them desirous of another, that will, once for all, answer the public purposes, and obviate a repetition of the demand. It ought, by all means, to be attempted; and Congress should frame a general plan, and press the execution upon the States.

When the Confederation comes to be framed, it ought to provide for this by a fundamental law; and hereafter there would be no doubt of the success.

But we cannot now wait for this. We want to replace the men whose times of service will expire the first of January: for then, without this, we shall have no army remaining; and the enemy may do what they please. The General, in his letter already quoted, has assigned the most substantial reasons for paying immediate attention to this point.

Congress should endeavor, both upon their credit in Europe, and by every possible exertion in this country, to provide clothing for their officers; and should abolish the whole system of State supplies. The making good the depreciation of the currency, and all other compensations to the army, should be immediately taken up by Congress, and not left to the States. If they would have the accounts of depreciation liquidated, and governmental certificates given for what is due, in specie, or an equivalent to specie, it would give satisfaction; appointing periodical settlements for future depreciation.

The placing the officers upon half-pay during life, would be a great stroke of policy; and would give Congress a stronger tie upon them than any thing else they can do. No man, that

reflects a moment, but will prefer a permanent provision of this kind to any temporary compensation. Nor is it opposed to economy: the difference between this, and between what has already been done, will be insignificant. The benefit of it to the widows should be confined to those whose husbands die during the war. As to the survivors, not more than one half, on the usual calculation of men's lives, will exceed the seven years for which the half-pay is already established. Beside this, whatever may be the visionary speculations of some men at this time, we shall find it indispensable, after the war, to keep on foot a considerable body of troops: and all the officers, retained for this purpose, must be deducted out of the half-pay list. If any one will take the pains to calculate the expense of these principles, I am persuaded he will find the addition of expense, from the establishment proposed, by no means a national object.

The advantages of securing the attachment of the army to Congress, and binding them to the service by substantial ties, are immense. We should then have discipline; an army in reality, as well as in name. Congress would then have a solid basis of authority and consequence: for, to me, it is an axiom, that in our constitution, an army is essential to the American Union.

The providing of supplies, is the pivot of every thing else (though a well-constituted army would, not in a small degree, conduce to this, by giving consistency and weight to Government). There are four ways, all of which must be united: A foreign loan; heavy pecuniary taxes; a tax in kind; a Bank founded on public and private credit.

As to a foreign loan, I dare say Congress are doing every thing in their power to obtain it. The most effectual way will be to tell France, that, without it, we must make terms with Great Britain. This must be done with plainness and firmness; but with respect, and without petulance; not as a menace, but as a candid declaration of our circumstances.

We need not fear to be deserted by France. Her interest and honor are too deeply involved in our fate; and she can make no possible compromise. She can assist us, if she is convinced it is

absolutely necessary; either by lending us, herself, or by becoming our surety, or by influencing Spain. It has been to me astonishing, how any man could have doubted, at any period of our affairs, of the necessity of a foreign loan. It was self-evident, that we had not a fund of wealth in this country capable of affording revenues equal to the expenses. We must then create artificial revenues, or borrow. The first was done; but it ought to have been foreseen that the expedient could not last, and we should have provided in time for its failure.

Here was an error of Congress. I have good reason to believe, that measures were not taken, in earnest, early enough to procure a loan abroad. I give you my honor, that from our first outset, I thought as I do now, and wished for a foreign loan; not only because I foresaw it would be essential, but because I considered it as a tie upon the nation from which it was derived, and as a mean to prop our cause in Europe.

Concerning the necessity of heavy pecuniary taxes, I need say nothing; as it is a point in which every body is agreed. Nor is there any danger, that the product of any taxes, raised in this way, will overburthen the people, or exceed the wants of the public. Indeed, if all the paper in circulation were drawn annually into the treasury, it would neither do one nor the other.

As to a tax in kind, the necessity of it results from this principle: that the money in circulation is not a sufficient representative of the productions of the country; and, consequently, no revenues, raised from it as a medium, can be a competent representative of that part of the products of the country which it is bound to contribute to the support of the public. The public, therefore, to obtain its due, or satisfy its just demands, and its wants, must call for a part of those products themselves. This is done in all those countries which are not commercial: in Russia, Prussia, Denmark, Sweden, etc., and is peculiarly necessary in our case.

Congress, in calling for specific supplies, seem to have had this in view; but their intention has not been answered. The States, in general, have undertaken to furnish supplies by purchase; a mode, as I have observed, attended with every incon-

venience, and subverting the principle on which the supplies were demanded; the insufficiency of our circulating medium as a representative for the labor and commodities of the country. It is therefore necessary that Congress should be more explicit; should form the outlines of a plan for a tax in kind, and recommend it to the States as a measure of absolute necessity.

The general idea I have of a plan, is, that a respectable man should be appointed by the State, in each county, to collect the taxes and form magazines; that Congress should have, in each State, an officer to superintend the whole; and that the State collectors should be subordinate and responsible to them. This Continental Superintendent might be subject to the general direction of the Quarter-Master-General, or not, as might be deemed best; but if not subject to him, he should be obliged to make monthly returns to the President at War, who should instruct him what proportion to deliver to the Quarter-Master-General. It may be necessary, that the Superintendents should sometimes have power to dispose of the articles in their possession, on public account; for it would happen, that the contributions, in places remote from the army, could not be transported to the theatre of operations without too great expense; in which case it would be eligible to dispose of them, and purchase, with the money so raised, in the countries near the immediate scene of war.

I know the objections which may be raised to this plan; its tendency to discourage industry, and the like. But necessity calls for it. We cannot proceed without it: and less evils must give place to greater. It is, besides, practised with success in other countries, and why not in this? It may be said, the examples cited are from nations under despotic governments; and that the same would not be practicable with us. But I contend, where the public good is evidently the object, more may be effected in governments like ours, than in any other. It has been a constant remark, that free countries have ever paid the heaviest taxes. The obedience of a free people to general laws, however hard they bear, is ever more perfect than that of slaves to the arbitrary will of a prince. To this may be added, that Sweden was always a free government; and is so now, in a great degree, notwithstanding the late revolution.

How far it may be practicable to erect a Bank on the joint credit of the public and of individuals, can only be certainly determined by the experiment. But it is of so much importance, that the experiment ought to be fully tried. When I saw the subscriptions going on to the Bank established for supplying the army, I was in hopes it was only the embryo of a more permanent and extensive establishment. But I have reason to believe I shall be disappointed. It does not seem to be at all conducted on the true principles of a Bank.

The Directors of it are purchasing with their Stock, instead of Bank notes, as I expected: in consequence of which, it must turn out to be a mere subscription of a particular sum of money for a particular purpose.

Paper credit never was long supported in any country, on a national scale, where it was not founded on a joint basis of public and private credit. An attempt to establish it on public credit alone, in France, under the auspices of Mr. Law, had nearly ruined the kingdom. We have seen the effects of it in America; and every successive experiment, proves the futility of the attempt. Our new money is depreciating almost as fast as the old; though it has, in some States, as real funds as paper money ever had. The reason is, that the moneyed men have not an immediate interest to uphold its credit. They may even, in many ways, find it their interest to undermine it. The only certain manner to obtain a permanent paper credit, is to engage the moneyed interest immediately in it, by making them contribute the whole, or part of the Stock, and giving them the whole, or part of the profits.

The invention of Banks, on the modern principle, originated in Venice. There the public, and a Company of moneyed men, are mutually concerned. The Bank of England unites public authority and faith with private credit: and hence we see, what a vast fabric of paper credit is raised on a visionary basis. Had it not been for this, England would never have found sufficient funds to carry on her wars: but, with the help of this, she has done, and is doing, wonders. The Bank of Amsterdam is on a similar foundation.

And why can we not have an American Bank? Are our moneyed men less enlightened to their own interest, or less enterprising in the pursuit? I believe the fault is in Government, which does not exert itself to engage them in such a scheme. It is true, the individuals in America are not very rich; but this would not prevent their instituting a Bank; it would only prevent its being done with such ample funds as in other countries. Have they not sufficient confidence in the Government, and in the issue of the cause? Let the Government endeavor to inspire that confidence, by adopting the measures I have recommended, or others equivalent to them. Let it exert itself to procure a solid Confederation; to establish a good plan of executive administration; to form a permanent military force; to obtain, at all events, a foreign loan. If these things were in a train of vigorous execution, it would give a new spring to our affairs; Government would recover its respectability, and individuals would renounce their diffidence.

The object I should propose to myself, in the first instance, from a Bank, would be an auxiliary mode of supplies; for which purpose, contracts should be made, between Government and the Bank, on terms liberal and advantageous to the latter. Every thing should be done, in the first instance, to encourage the Bank. After it gets well established, it will take care of itself; and Government may make the best terms it can, for itself.

The first step to establishing the Bank, will be to engage a number of moneyed men of influence to relish the project, and make it a business. The subscribers to that lately established, are the fittest persons that can be found; and their plan may be interwoven.

The outlines of my plan would be, to open subscriptions in all the States, for the Stock, which we will suppose to be one million of pounds. Real property of every kind, as well as specie, should be deemed good Stock; but at least a fourth part of the subscription should be in specie, or plate. There should be one great Company, in three divisions: in Virginia, Philadelphia, and at Boston; or two at Philadelphia and Boston. The Bank should have a right to issue Bank notes, bearing two per cent.

interest, for the whole of their stock; but not to exceed it. These notes may be payable every three months, or oftener: and the faith of government must be pledged for the support of the Bank. It must therefore have a right, from time to time, to inspect its operations, and must appoint inspectors for the purpose.

The advantages of the Bank may consist in this: in the profits of the contracts made with Government, which should bear interest to be annually paid in specie; in the loan of money at interest, say six per cent.; in purchasing lives by annuities, as practised in England, etc. The benefit resulting to the Company, is evident from the consideration, that they may employ, in circulation, a great deal more money than they have specie in Stock, on the credit of the real property which they will have in other use. This money will be employed, either in fulfilling their contracts with the public, by which also they will gain a profit; or in loans at an advantageous interest, or in annuities.

The Bank may be allowed to purchase plate and bullion, and coin money; allowing Government a part of the profit. I make the Bank notes bear interest, to obtain a readier currency, and to induce the holders to prefer them to specie, to prevent too great a run upon the Bank, at any time, beyond its ability to pay.

If Government can obtain a foreign loan, it should lend to the Bank, on easy terms, to extend its influence, and facilitate a compliance with its engagements. If Government could engage the States to raise a sum of money in specie, to be deposited in Bank in the same manner, it would be of the greatest consequence. If Government could prevail on the enthusiasm of the people, to make a contribution in plate for the same purpose, it would be a master-stroke. Things of this kind sometimes succeed in popular contests; and, if undertaken with address, I should not despair of its success: but I should not be sanguine.

The Bank may be instituted for a term of years by way of trial; and the particular privilege of coining money, be for a term still shorter. A temporary transfer of it to a particular Company, can have no inconvenience, as the Government are in no condition to improve this resource; nor could it, in our circumstances, be an object to them; though, with the industry of a knot of individuals, it might be a valuable one to them.

A Bank of this kind, even in its commencement, would answer the most valuable purposes to Government and to the proprietors: in its progress, the advantages will exceed calculation. It will promote commerce, by furnishing a more extensive medium, which we greatly want, in our circumstances. I mean a more extensive valuable medium. We have an enormous nominal one at this time, but it is only a name.

In the present unsettled state of things in this country, we can hardly draw inferences from what has happened in others; otherwise I should be certain of the success of this scheme: but I think it has enough in its favor to be worthy of trial.

I have only skimmed the surface of the different subjects I have introduced. Should the plans recommended come into contemplation, in earnest, and you desire my further thoughts, I will endeavor to give them more form and particularity. I am persuaded a solid Confederation, a permanent army, a reasonable prospect of subsisting it, would give us treble consideration in Europe, and produce a peace this winter.

If a Convention is called, the minds of all the States, and the people, ought to be prepared to receive its determinations by sensible and popular writings, which should conform to the views of Congress. There are epochs in human affairs when *novelty* even is useful. If a general opinion prevails that the old way is bad, whether true or false, and this obstructs or relaxes the operations of the public service, a change is necessary, if it be but for the sake of change. This is exactly the case now. 'Tis a universal sentiment, that our present system is a bad one, and that things do not go right on this account. The measure of a Convention would revive the hopes of the people, and give a new direction to their passions, which may be improved in carrying points of substantial utility. The eastern States have already pointed out this mode to Congress: they ought to take the hint and anticipate the others.

And, in future, my dear sir, two things let me recommend, as fundamental rules for the conduct of Congress: to attach the army to them by every motive; to maintain an air of authority (not domineering) in all their measures with the States. The

manner in which a thing is done, has more influence than is commonly imagined. Men are governed by opinion: this opinion is as much influenced by appearances as by realities. If a Government appears to be confident of its own powers, it is the surest way to inspire the same confidence in others. If it is diffident, it may be certain there will be a still greater diffidence in others; and that its authority will not only be distrusted, controverted, but contemned.

I wish, too, Congress would always consider, that a kindness consists as much in the manner as in the thing. The best things done hesitatingly, and with an ill grace, lose their effect, and produce disgust rather than satisfaction or gratitude. In what Congress have at any time done for the army, they have commonly been too late. They have seemed to yield to importunity, rather than to sentiments of justice or to a regard to the accommodation of their troops. An attention to this idea, is of more importance than it may be thought. I, who have seen all the workings and progress of the present discontents, am convinced, that a want of this has not been among the most inconsiderable causes.

You will perceive, my dear sir, this letter is hastily written, and with a confidential freedom: not as to a member of Congress, whose feelings may be sore at the prevailing clamors; but as to a friend, who is in a situation to remedy public disorders; who wishes for nothing so much as truth; and who is desirous of information, even from those less capable of judging than himself. I have not even time to correct and copy; and only enough to add, that I am, very truly and affectionately, dear sir,

Your most obedient servant,

A. HAMILTON.

SCHUYLER TO HAMILTON.

1780.

MY DEAR SIR:

Your favor of the 17th I received on that day. That of the 13th has taken a tour to Albany and was delivered me this moment.

Commissioners will be appointed to meet the Eastern Convention; I believe Judge Hubbard, Mr. Benson, the Attorney General, and myself, will go; the two gentlemen I have mentioned are as deeply impressed as men can be with the necessity of more power in the directing councils, or what would be better in our present situation, ———. The lower house are for it, but the upper timid, although heartily disposed to every measure which will give vigor.

I was too much indisposed to undertake the journey to Hartford, and continue so much so that I am obliged to quit this before the Legislature rises.

I am informed Gates is to have the thanks of the Senate for not despairing of the Commonwealth, but that they do not mean to tread wholly in the steps of the Romans, and confine him to subordinate commands; he is to have a potent army, and to drive Cornwallis and his crew into the sea with more rapidity than he flew to Hillsborough.

Pray entreat the General and the gentlemen of his family to accept of my best wishes, in which you always partake.

I am, dear Sir,

Affectionately yours, etc.,

P. SCHUYLER.

Col. Hamilton.

HAMILTON TO MISS SCHUYLER.

September 6, 1780.

Most people here are groaning under a very disagreeable piece of intelligence just come from the southward, that Gates has had a total defeat near Camden, in South Carolina. Corn-

wallis and he met in the night of the fifteenth, by accident, marching to the same point. The advanced guards skirmished, and the two armies halted and formed till morning. In the morning a battle ensued, in which the militia, and Gates with them, immediately ran away, and left the Continental troops to contend with the enemy's whole force.

They did it obstinately, and probably are most of them cut off. Gates, however, who writes to Congress, seems to know very little what has become of his army. He showed that age and the long labors and fatigues of a military life had not in the least impaired his activity, for in three days and a half he reached Hillsborough, one hundred and eighty miles from the scene of action, leaving all his troops to take care of themselves, and get out of the scrape as well as they could.

He has confirmed, in this instance, the opinion I always had of him. This event will have very serious consequences to the southward. People's imaginations have already given up North Carolina and Virginia; but I do not believe either of them will fall. I am certain Virginia cannot. This misfortune affects me less than others, because it is not in my temper to repine at evils that are past, but to endeavor to draw good out of them, and because I think our safety depends on a total change of system, and this change of system will only be produced by misfortune.

A. HAMILTON.

HAMILTON TO DUANE.

September 6, 1780.

MY DEAR SIR:

The letter accompanying this has lain by two or three days for want of an opportunity. I have heard since of Gates's defeat: a very good comment on the necessity of changing our system. His passion for militia, I fancy, will be a little cured, and he will cease to think them the best bulwark of American liberty. What think you of the conduct of this great man? I am his

enemy personally, for unjust and unprovoked attacks upon my character; therefore what I say of him ought to be received as from an enemy, and have no more weight than as it is consistent with fact and common sense. But did ever any one hear of such a disposition or such a flight? His best troops placed on the side strongest by nature, his worst on that weakest by nature, and his attack made with these. 'Tis impossible to give a more complete picture of military absurdity. It is equally against the maxims of war and common sense. We see the consequences. His left ran away, and left his right uncovered. His right wing turned on the left has in all probability been cut off. Though, in truth, the General seems to have known very little what became of his army.

Had he placed his militia on his right, supported by the morass, and his Continental troops on his left, where it seems he was most vulnerable, his right would have been more secure, and his left would have opposed the enemy; and instead of going backward when he ordered to attack, would have gone forward. The reverse of what has happened might have happened.

But was there ever an instance of a General running away, as Gates has done, from his whole army? And was there ever so precipitous a flight? One hundred and eighty miles in three days and a half. It does admirable credit to the activity of a man at his time of life. But it disgraces the General and the soldier. I always believed him to be very far short of a Hector, or a Ulysses. All the world, I think, will begin to agree with me.

But what will be done by Congress? Will he be changed or not? If he is changed, for God's sake overcome prejudice, and send Greene. You know my opinion of him. I stake my reputation on the events, give him but fair play.

But, above all things, let us have, without delay, a vigorous government, and a well constituted army for the war.

Adieu, my dear Sir,

A. HAMILTON.

COL. FLEURY TO HAMILTON.

Boston, September 7, 1780.

If you do write to me, direct your letters to General Heath, and under his cover. I cannot tell why till I see you; I want it much.

The enemy have left Martha's Vineyard. It is reported they sailed to the southward.

I beg you would remember me to my friend Laurens; I have written to him, but he keeps silent.

I do not like your situation at Lee's Fort: you throw the glove to Clinton; he will take it, and we are not near enough to be your seconds. Our sick increase; not much; but they increase.

Farewell, your servant and friend,

F * * Y.

HAMILTON TO LAURENS.

September, 1780.

Since my return from Hartford, my dear Laurens, my mind has been too little at ease to permit me to write to you sooner. It has been wholly occupied by the affecting and tragic consequences of Arnold's treason. My feelings were never put to so severe a trial. You will no doubt have heard the principal facts before this reaches you. But there are particulars, to which my situation gave me access, that cannot have come to your knowledge from public report, which I am persuaded you will find interesting.

From several circumstances, the project seems to have originated with Arnold himself, and to have been long premeditated. The first overture is traced back to some time in June last. It was conveyed in a letter to Colonel Robinson; the substance of which was, that the ingratitude he had experienced from his

country, concurring with other causes, had entirely changed his principles; that he now only sought to restore himself to the favor of his king, by some signal proof of his repentance; and would be happy to open a correspondence with Sir Henry Clinton for that purpose. About this period he made a journey to Connecticut: on his return from which to Philadelphia, he solicited the command of West Point; alleging that the effects of his wounds had disqualified him for the active duties of the field. The sacrifice of this important post was the atonement he intended to make. General Washington hesitated the less to gratify an officer who had rendered such eminent services, as he was convinced the post might be safely intrusted to one who had given so many distinguished specimens of his bravery. In the beginning of August he joined the army and renewed his application. The enemy, at this juncture, had embarked the greatest part of their forces on an expedition to Rhode Island; and our army was in motion to compel them to relinquish the enterprise, or to attack New-York in its weakened state. The General offered Arnold the left wing of the army, which he declined, on the pretext already mentioned, but not without visible embarrassment. He certainly might have executed the duties of such a temporary command; and it was expected from his enterprising temper, that he would gladly have embraced so splendid an opportunity. But he did not choose to be diverted a moment from his favorite object; probably from an apprehension that some different disposition might have taken place, which would have excluded him. The extreme solicitude he discovered to get possession of the post, would have led to a suspicion of treachery, had it been possible, from his past conduct, to have supposed him capable of it.

The correspondence thus begun, was carried on between Arnold and Major André, Adjutant-General to the British army, in behalf of Sir Henry Clinton, under feigned signatures, and in a mercantile disguise. In an intercepted letter of Arnold's, which lately fell into our hands, he proposes an interview, "to settle the risks and profits of the copartnership;" and, in the same style of metaphor, intimates an expected augmentation of

the garrison; and speaks of it as the means of extending their traffic. It appears, by another letter, that André was to have met him on the lines, under the sanction of a flag, in the character of Mr. John Anderson. But some cause or other, not known, prevented this interview.

The twentieth of last month, Robinson and André went up the river in the Vulture sloop-of-war. Robinson sent a flag to Arnold with two letters; one to General Putnam, inclosed in another to himself; proposing an interview with Putnam, or, in his absence, with Arnold, to adjust some private concerns. The one to General Putnam, was evidently meant as a cover to the other, in case, by accident, the letters should have fallen under the inspection of a third person.

General Washington crossed the river, on his way to Hartford, the day these dispatches arrived. Arnold, conceiving he must have heard of the flag, thought it necessary, for the sake of appearances, to submit the letters to him, and ask his opinion of the propriety of complying with the request. The General, with his usual caution, though without the least surmise of the design, dissuaded him from it, and advised him to reply to Robinson, that whatever related to his private affairs, must be of a civil nature, and could only properly be addressed to the civil authority. This reference fortunately deranged the plan; and was the first link in the chain of events that led to the detection. The interview could no longer take place in the form of a flag, but was obliged to be managed in a secret manner.

Arnold employed one Smith to go on board the Vulture the night of the twenty-second, to bring André on shore, with a pass for Mr. John Anderson. Andre came ashore accordingly; and was conducted within a picket of ours to the house of Smith, where Arnold and he remained together in close conference all that night and the day following. At daylight in the morning, the commanding officer at King's Ferry, without the privity of Arnold, moved a couple of pieces of cannon to a point opposite to where the Vulture lay, and obliged her to take a more remote station. This event, or some lurking distrust, made the boatmen refuse to convey the two passengers back, and disconcerted

Arnold so much, that by one of those strokes of infatuation which often confound the schemes of men conscious of guilt, he insisted on André's exchanging his uniform for a disguise, and returning in a mode different from that in which he came. André, who had been undesignedly brought within our posts in the first instance, remonstrated warmly against this new and dangerous expedient. But Arnold persisting in declaring it impossible for him to return as he came, he at length reluctantly yielded to his direction, and consented to change his dress, and take the route he recommended. Smith furnished the disguise, and in the evening passed King's Ferry with him, and proceeded to Crompond, where they stopped the remainder of the night, at the instance of a militia officer, to avoid being suspected by him. The next morning they resumed their journey, Smith accompanying André a little beyond Pine's Bridge, where he left him. He had reached Tarrytown, when he was taken up by three militia men, who rushed out of the woods and seized his horse.

At this critical moment, his presence of mind forsook him. Instead of producing his pass, which would have extricated him from our parties, and could have done him no harm with his own, he asked the militia men, if they were of the *upper* or *lower* party; distinctive appellations known among the enemy's refugee corps. The militia men replied, they were of the lower party; upon which he told them he was a British officer, and pressed them not to detain him, as he was upon urgent business. This confession removed all doubts; and it was in vain he afterwards produced his pass. He was instantly forced off to a place of greater security, where, after a careful search, there were found, concealed in the feet of his stockings, several papers of importance, delivered to him by Arnold! Among these, were a plan of the fortifications of West Point; a memorial from the engineer on the attack and defence of the place; returns of the garrison, cannon, and stores; copy of the minutes of a council of war held by General Washington a few weeks before. The prisoner, at first, was inadvertently ordered to Arnold; but on recollection, while still on the way, he was countermanded, and sent to Old Salem. The papers were inclosed in a letter to General

Washington, which, having taken a route different from that by which he returned, made a circuit that afforded leisure for another letter, through an ill-judged delicacy, written to Arnold with information of Anderson's capture, to get to him an hour before General Washington arrived at his quarters; time enough to elude the fate that awaited him. He went down the river in his barge to the Vulture with such precipitate confusion, that he did not take with him a single paper useful to the enemy. On the first notice of the affair, he was pursued, but much too late to be overtaken.

There was some color for imagining it was a part of the plan to betray the General into the hands of the enemy. Arnold was very anxious to ascertain from him the precise day of his return; and the enemy's movements seem to have corresponded to this point. But if it was really the case, it was very injudicious. The success must have depended on surprise; and as the officers at the advanced posts were not in the secret, their measures might have given the alarm; and General Washington, taking the command of the post, might have rendered the whole scheme abortive. Arnold, it is true, had so dispersed the garrison, as to have made a defence difficult, but not impracticable; and the acquisition of West Point was of such magnitude to the enemy, that it would have been unwise to connect it with any other object, however great, which might make the obtaining of it precarious.

Arnold, a moment before the setting out, went into Mrs. Arnold's apartment, and informed her that some transactions had just come to light, which must for ever banish him from his country. She fell into a swoon at this declaration: and he left her in it, to consult his own safety, till the servants, alarmed by her cries, came to her relief. She remained frantic all day; accusing every one who approached her, with an intention to murder her child (an infant in her arms); and exhibiting every other mark of the most genuine and agonizing distress. Exhausted by the fatigue and tumult of her spirits, her phrensy subsided towards evening, and she sank into all the sadness of affliction. It was impossible not to have been touched with her

situation. Every thing affecting in female tears, or in the misfortunes of beauty; every thing pathetic in the wounded tenderness of a wife, or in the apprehensive fondness of a mother; and, till I have reason to change the opinion, I will add, every thing amiable in suffering innocence; conspired to make her an object of sympathy to all who were present. She experienced the most delicate attentions, and every friendly office, till her departure for Philadelphia.

André was, without loss of time, conducted to the head quarters of the army, where he was immediately brought before a Board of General Officers, to prevent all possibility of misrepresentation, or cavil on the part of the enemy. The Board reported, that he ought to be considered as a spy, and, according to the laws of nations, to suffer death; which was executed two days after.

Never, perhaps, did any man suffer death with more justice, or deserve it less. The first step he took, after his capture, was to write a letter to General Washington, conceived in terms of dignity without insolence, and apology without meanness. The scope of it was to vindicate himself from the imputation of having assumed a mean character for treacherous or interested purposes; asserting that he had been involuntarily an impostor; that contrary to his intention, which was to meet a person for intelligence on neutral ground, he had been betrayed within our posts, and forced into the vile condition of an enemy in disguise; soliciting only, that, to whatever rigor policy might devote him, a decency of treatment might be observed, due to a person, who, though unfortunate, had been guilty of nothing dishonorable. His request was granted in its full extent; for, in the whole progress of the affair, he was treated with the most scrupulous delicacy. When brought before the Board of Officers, he met with every mark of indulgence, and was required to answer no interrogatory which could even embarrass his feelings. On his part, while he carefully concealed every thing that might involve others, he frankly confessed all the facts relating to himself; and, upon his confession, without the trouble of examining a witness, the Board made their

Report. The members of it were not more impressed with the candor and firmness, mixed with a becoming sensibility, which he displayed, than he was penetrated with their liberality and politeness. He acknowledged the generosity of the behavior towards him in every respect, but particularly in this, in the strongest terms of manly gratitude. In a conversation with a gentleman who visited him after his trial, he said he flattered himself he had never been illiberal; but if there were any remains of prejudice in his mind, his present experience must obliterate them.

In one of the visits I made to him (and I saw him several times during his confinement), he begged me to be the bearer of a request to the General, for permission to send an open letter to Sir Henry Clinton. "I foresee my fate," said he, "and though I pretend not to play the hero, or to be indifferent about life; yet I am reconciled to whatever may happen, conscious that misfortune, not guilt, has brought it upon me. There is only one thing that disturbs my tranquillity. Sir Henry Clinton has been too good to me; he has been lavish of his kindness. I am bound to him by too many obligations, and love him too well, to bear the thought, that he should reproach himself, or that others should reproach him, on the supposition of my having conceived myself obliged, by his instructions, to run the risk I did. I would not, for the world, leave a sting in his mind that should imbitter his future days." He could scarce finish the sentence, bursting into tears in spite of his efforts to suppress them; and with difficulty collected himself enough afterwards to add: "I wish to be permitted to assure him, I did not act under this impression, but submitted to a necessity imposed upon me, as contrary to my own inclination as to his orders." His request was readily complied with; and he wrote the letter annexed, with which I dare say you will be as much pleased as I am, both for the diction and sentiment.

When his sentence was announced to him, he remarked, that since it was his lot to die, there was still a choice in the mode, which would make a material difference in his feelings; and he would be happy, if possible, to be indulged with a professional

death. He made a second application, by letter, in concise but persuasive terms. It was thought this indulgence, being incompatible with the customs of war, could not be granted; and it was therefore determined, in both cases, to evade an answer, to spare him the sensations which a certain knowledge of the intended mode would inflict.

In going to the place of execution, he bowed familiarly as he went along, to all those with whom he had been acquainted in his confinement. A smile of complacency expressed the serene fortitude of his mind. Arrived at the fatal spot, he asked, with some emotion, "Must I then die in this manner?" He was told it had been unavoidable. "I am reconciled to my fate," said he, "but not to the mode." Soon, however, recollecting himself, he added: "It will be but a momentary pang:" and, springing upon the cart, performed the last offices to himself, with a composure that excited the admiration, and melted the hearts of the beholders. Upon being told the final moment was at hand, and asked if he had any thing to say, he answered, "Nothing but to request you will witness to the world, that I die like a brave man." Among the extraordinary circumstances that attended him, in the midst of his enemies, he died universally esteemed and universally regretted.

There was something singularly interesting in the character and fortunes of André. To an excellent understanding, well improved by education and travel, he united a peculiar elegance of mind and manners, and the advantage of a pleasing person. 'Tis said he possessed a pretty taste for the fine arts, and had himself attained some proficiency in poetry, music, and painting. His knowledge appeared without ostentation, and embellished by a diffidence that rarely accompanies so many talents and accomplishments: which left you to suppose more than appeared. His sentiments were elevated, and inspired esteem: they had a softness that conciliated affection. His elocution was handsome: his address easy, polite, and insinuating. By his merit, he had acquired the unlimited confidence of his General, and was making a rapid progress in military rank and reputation. But in the height of his career, flushed with new hopes from the

execution of a project, the most beneficial to his party that could be devised, he was at once precipitated from the summit of prosperity, and saw all the expectations of his ambition blasted, and himself ruined.

The character I have given of him, is drawn partly from what I saw of him myself, and partly from information. I am aware that a man of real merit is never seen in so favorable a light as through the medium of adversity: the clouds that surround him, are shades that set off his good qualities. Misfortune cuts down the little vanities that, in prosperous times, serve as so many spots in his virtues; and gives a tone of humility that makes his worth more amiable. His spectators, who enjoy a happier lot, are less prone to detract from it, through envy, and are more disposed, by compassion, to give him the credit he deserves, and perhaps even to magnify it.

I speak not of André's conduct in this affair as a philosopher, but as a man of the world. The authorized maxims and practices of war, are the satires of human nature. They countenance almost every species of seduction as well as violence; and the General who can make most traitors in the army of his adversary, is frequently most applauded. On this scale we acquit André; while we could not but condemn him, if we were to examine his conduct by the sober rules of philosophy and moral rectitude. It is, however, a blemish on his fame, that he once intended to prostitute a flag: about this, a man of nice honor ought to have had a scruple; but the temptation was great: let his misfortunes cast a veil over his error.

Several letters from Sir Henry Clinton and others, were received in the course of the affair, feebly attempting to prove, that André came out under the protection of a flag, with a passport from a general officer in actual service; and consequently could not be justly detained. Clinton sent a deputation, composed of Lieutenant-General Robinson, Mr. Elliot, and Mr. William Smith, to represent, as he said, the true state of Major André's case. General Greene met Robinson, and had a conversation with him; in which he reiterated the pretence of a flag; urged André's release as a personal favor to Sir Henry Clinton; and offered any

friend of ours, in their power, in exchange. Nothing could have been more frivolous than the plea which was used. The fact was, that beside the time, manner, object of the interview, change of dress, and other circumstances, there was not a single formality customary with flags; and the passport was not to Major André, but to Mr. Anderson. But had there been, on the contrary, all the formalities, it would be an abuse of language to say, that the sanction of a flag for corrupting an officer to betray his trust, ought to be respected. So unjustifiable a purpose, would not only destroy its validity, but make it an aggravation.

André, himself, has answered the argument, by ridiculing and exploding the idea, in his examination before the Board of Officers. It was a weakness to urge it.

There was, in truth, no way of saving him. Arnold, or he, must have been the victim: the former was out of our power.

It was by some suspected, Arnold had taken his measures in such a manner, that if the interview had been discovered in the act, it might have been in his power to sacrifice André to his own security. This surmise of double treachery, made them imagine Clinton might be induced to give up Arnold for André; and a gentleman took occasion to suggest this expedient to the latter, as a thing that might be proposed by him. He declined it. The moment he had been capable of so much frailty, I should have ceased to esteem him.

The infamy of Arnold's conduct previous to his desertion, is only equalled by his baseness since. Beside the folly of writing to Sir Henry Clinton, assuring him that André had acted under a passport from him, and according to his directions while commanding officer at a post; and that, therefore, he did not doubt, he would be immediately sent in; he had the effrontery to write to General Washington in the same spirit; with the addition of a menace of retaliation, if the sentence should be carried into execution. He has since acted the farce of sending in his resignation. This man is, in every sense, despicable. Added to the scene of knavery and prostitution during his command in Philadelphia, which the late seizure of his papers has unfolded; the history of his command at West Point is a history of little, as

well as great, villanies. He practised every dirty art of peculation; and even stooped to connections with the suttlers of the garrison, to defraud the public.

To his conduct, that of the captors of André forms a striking contrast. He tempted them with the offer of his watch, his horse, and any sum of money they should name. They rejected his offers with indignation: and the gold that could seduce a man high in the esteem and confidence of his country, who had the remembrance of past exploits, the motives of present reputation and future glory, to prop his integrity, had no charms for three simple peasants, leaning only on their virtue and an honest sense of their duty. While Arnold is handed down, with execration, to future times, posterity will repeat, with reverence, the names of Van Wart, Paulding, and Williams.

I congratulate you, my friend, on our happy escape from the mischiefs with which this treason was big. It is a new comment on the value of an honest man, and if it were possible, would endear you to me more than ever.

Adieu,

A. HAMILTON.

SCHUYLER TO HAMILTON.

POUGHKEEPSIE, Sept. 10, 1780.

MY DEAR SIR:

I am very apprehensive the unhappy event, mentioned in your favor of the fifth instant, will draw very serious consequences in its train. It will certainly much embarrass us, and probably retard the termination of the war. It will, however, be attended with one good; the adherents, in Congress, to the gallant Commander, will not have it any longer in their power to play him off against the General. Gracious God! that any rational being should put two men in competition, one of which has *commanded* an army, the other only been at the head of one; for I aver, that when he was to the northward, he never made a disposition of his troops. Indeed he was incapable: he never

saw an enemy, except at a good distance, and from places of perfect security. Indeed, indeed, he has not lost a whit, in my estimation, by this stroke of his.

The General will have shown you extracts from the Senate and Assembly's Addresses to the Governor. A Committee of both Houses is appointed to report on the proceedings of the Convention: they will certainly adopt and extend the views of that Convention. Some here are for appointing a Dictator, with a Vice Dictator in each State, invested with all the powers conferred formerly by the Roman people on theirs. I made great interest to be left out of the delegation, and obtained it, although not without much difficulty. General M'Dougal is appointed in my stead: but I believe I shall be obliged to go to the eastern Convention. If so, I shall not repair to Rhode Island so soon as I intended.

Colonel Warner is wounded, and two of his officers killed near Fort Edward.

Pray make my respects acceptable to the General, to the gentlemen of the family, the Marquis, and those of his.

Adieu.

I am, dear Sir,
Very affectionately and sincerely,
Your most obedient servant,
PH. SCHUYLER.

I forgot to inform the General that the Governor had sent him an extract of the proceedings of the Convention which I had promised to transmit.

SCHUYLER TO HAMILTON.

POUGHKEEPSIE, September 16, 1780.

DEAR SIR:

The great scarcity of wheat before harvest, and the drought since, has prevented the agent appointed to collect the supply required from this State, to deliver it to the Issuing Commissary;

and we are at least ten thousand barrels in arrears; the wheat for all which is already assessed, a considerable quantity of it brought to the mills to be manufactured, and the remainder daily collecting. Hence, unless a second drought should prevail, our deficiency can be made good in the course of a month: and this may be relied on. But should the army actually be in operation, I do not *make a doubt* but that the hand of Government will be laid on all in the country; and, in that case, a constant supply can be kept up so as to complete to thirty thousand barrels, and perhaps half as much more, should Congress order the quota of Pennsylvania (if she deigns to furnish any) to be sold, and the money transmitted to this State. Exclusive of the wheat already assessed to complete our quota of flour, the inhabitants of Tryon County, and the western part of Albany, are threshing. This the Legislature has ordered to be purchased for a State Magazine, should we not be able to purchase the whole. The whole may, however, be obtained, and without delay, if an operation takes place: to procure flour casks is the greatest difficulty. I wish those at West Point were ordered to be immediately put in order: those, and an aid of bags, may be necessary.

I have communed with the Governor on the subject of M'Henry's wish. He is very much disposed to use his influence on the occasion, but doubts if he should be able to obtain a Lieutenancy, unless the Ensigns that now are, could all be provided for. If M'Henry merely wants military rank for the campaign, and will not accept of an Ensigncy, the Governor can, and will, give him a Lieutenant-Colonelcy in the State Levies, which will always give him rank in our militia, and, consequently, in the army, when the militia is in the field. But this must be determined before the Legislature rises. Please, therefore, to desire M'Henry to write me on the subject without delay, and to assure him of the best services in my power.

If I knew when you would be at Fishkill, if you pass that way, I would meet you there. Or if I believed it would not be disagreeable to the General, I would go to Hartford, as I wish to see the other Sachem.

A spirit favorable to the common cause, has pervaded almost

both Houses. They begin to talk of a Dictator and Vice Dictators, as if it was a thing that was already determined on. To the Convention to be held at Hartford, I believe I shall be sent, with instructions to propose that a Dictator should be appointed.

I have just seen Van Schaick's whim. There is not one Lieutenancy vacant.

I have had the inclosed several days with me, for want of a conveyance. Please to dispatch the bearer as expeditiously back as you can. Compliments to all.

I am, dear Sir, affectionately yours, etc.,

PH. SCHUYLER.

Colonel Hamilton.

HAMILTON TO GREENE.

25th September, 1780.

DEAR SIR:

There has just been unfolded at this place a scene of the blackest treason. Arnold has fled to the enemy—André, the British Adjutant General, is in our possession as a spy. His capture unravelled the mystery.

West Point was to have been the sacrifice. All the dispositions have been made for the purpose, and 'tis possible, though not probable, we may still see the execution. The wind is fair. I came here in pursuit of Arnold, but was too late. I advise your putting the army under marching orders, and detaching a brigade immediately this way.

I am, with great regard,

Your most obedient servant,

ALEX. HAMILTON,

Aid-de-Camp.

To Major General Greene.

HAMILTON TO MISS SCHUYLER.

September 25, 1780.

Arnold, hearing of the plot being detected, immediately fled to the enemy. I went in pursuit of him, but was much too late; and could hardly regret the disappointment, when, on my return, I saw an amiable woman, frantic with distress for the loss of a husband she tenderly loved; a traitor to his country and to his fame; a disgrace to his connections: it was the most affecting scene I ever was witness to. She, for a considerable time, entirely lost herself. The General went up to see her, and she upbraided him with being in a plot to murder her child. One moment she raved, another she melted into tears. Sometimes she pressed her infant to her bosom, and lamented its fate, occasioned by the imprudence of its father, in a manner that would have pierced insensibility itself. All the sweetness of beauty, all the loveliness of innocence, all the tenderness of a wife, and all the fondness of a mother, showed themselves in her appearance and conduct. We have every reason to believe, that she was entirely unacquainted with the plan, and that the first knowledge of it, was when Arnold went to tell her he must banish himself from his country and from her for ever. She instantly fell into a convulsion, and he left her in that situation.

This morning she is more composed. I paid her a visit, and endeavored to soothe her by every method in my power; though you may imagine she is not easily to be consoled. Added to her other distresses, she is very apprehensive the resentment of her country will fall upon her (who is only unfortunate) for the guilt of her husband.

I have tried to persuade her that her fears are ill founded; but she will not be convinced. She received us in bed, with every circumstance that would interest our sympathy: and her sufferings were so eloquent, that I wished myself her brother, to have a right to become her defender. As it is, I have entreated her to enable me to give her proofs of my friendship. Could I forgive Arnold for sacrificing his honor, reputation, and duty, I

could not forgive him for acting a part that must have forfeited the esteem of so fine a woman. At present she almost forgets his crime in his misfortunes; and her horror at the guilt of the traitor, is lost in her love of the man. But a virtuous mind cannot long esteem a base one; and time will make her despise if it cannot make her hate.

A. HAMILTON.

HAMILTON TO MISS SCHUYLER.

TAPPAN, Oct. 2, 1780.

Poor André suffers to-day. Every thing that is amiable in virtue, in fortitude, in delicate sentiment, and accomplished manners, pleads for him: but hard-hearted policy calls for a sacrifice. He must die ——. I send you my account of Arnold's affair; and to justify myself to your sentiments, I must inform you, that I urged a compliance with André's request to be shot; and I do not think it would have had an ill effect: but some people are only sensible to motives of policy, and sometimes, from a narrow disposition, mistake it.

When André's tale comes to be told, and present resentment is over; the refusing him the privilege of choosing the manner of his death will be branded with too much obstinacy.

It was proposed to me to suggest to him the idea of an exchange for Arnold; but I knew I should have forfeited his esteem by doing it, and therefore declined it. As a man of honor he could not but reject it; and I would not for the world have proposed to him a thing which must have placed me in the unamiable light of supposing him capable of meanness, or of not feeling myself the impropriety of the measure. I confess to you, I had the weakness to value the esteem of a dying man, because I reverenced his merit.

A. HAMILTON.

SCHUYLER TO HAMILTON.

ALBANY, October 10, 1780.

MY DEAR SIR:

I am still confined to my room, but believe my disorder has taken a favorable turn, and that I shall soon be tolerably restored.

Colonel Van Schaick informs me that he is ordered down with his regiment. We are so sadly off here for directors, that I most sincerely wish he had been permitted to remain here: his deafness will render him little serviceable with his regiment.

I am informed that some people have recommended, or intend to recommend, to the General, to evacuate Fort Schuyler. I hope it will not take place, as the enemy would immediately occupy the ground, and make it a receptacle for Indians and tories, from whence to pour destruction on the country. A certain Lieutenant Laird, of the militia, who was carried off, or went off voluntarily, with Sir John Johnson, when last in the country, is returned, and advises that about two thousand men were collected at St. John's to make separate attacks on the Grants, Saratoga, and the Mohawk river. If this be true, it was probably intended as a co-operating plan, if Sir Harry had come up the river. An Express is this moment arrived, announcing that about five hundred men of the enemy are arrived at the Canajoharie Falls. If this should be confirmed, I shall venture to advise Van Schaick to detain his regiment, and hope it will meet the General's approbation. It is said the enemy are fortifying at Oswego. I hope the garrison for that place will be speedily sent up.

When do you intend to be here? Who will accompany you? Is it probable the General will pay us a visit in winter? I most earnestly wish it. Will you make my excuses to the Marquis for my not writing him: the Doctor will not permit me; but what is worse, I really have not strength as yet. Entreat the

General to accept of my best wishes: the family share in them. Adieu, my dear sir.

I am, affectionately,

Yours, etc., etc.,

PH. SCHUYLER.

Colonel Hamilton.

HAMILTON TO ISAAC SEARS.

BOSTON, October 12, 1780.

I was much obliged to you, my dear sir, for the letter which you did me the favor to write me since your return to Boston. I am sorry to find that the same spirit of indifference to public affairs prevails. It is necessary we should rouse, and begin to do our business in earnest, or we shall play a losing game. It is impossible the contest can be much longer supported on the present footing. We must have a Government with more power. We must have a tax in kind. We must have a foreign loan. We must have a Bank, on the true principles of a Bank. We must have an Administration distinct from Congress, and in the hands of single men under their orders. We must, above all things, have an army for the war, and an establishment that will interest the officers in the service.

Congress are deliberating on our military affairs: but I apprehend their resolutions will be tinctured with the old spirit. We seem to be proof against experience. They will, however, recommend an army for the war, at least as a primary object. All those who love their country, ought to exert their influence in the States where they reside, to determine them to take up this object with energy. The States must sink under the burden of temporary enlistments; and the enemy will conquer us by degrees during the intervals of our weakness.

Clinton is now said to be making a considerable detachment to the southward. My fears are high, my hopes low. We are told here, there is to be a Congress of the neutral powers at the Hague, for mediating of peace. God send it may be true. We

want it: but if the idea goes abroad, ten to one if we do not fancy the thing done, and fall into a profound sleep till the cannon of the enemy awaken us next campaign. This is our national character.

I am, with great regard, dear Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

A. HAMILTON.

HAMILTON TO DUANE.

Oct. 18, 1780.

MY DEAR SIR:

Since my last to you, I have had the pleasure of receiving two letters from you. I am sorry to find we do not seem to agree in the proper remedies to our disorder, at least in the practicability of applying those which are proper. Convinced, as I am, of the absolute insufficiency of our present system to our safety, if I do not despair of the Republic, it is more the effect of constitution than of judgment.

With the sentiments I entertain of Gates, I cannot but take pleasure in his removal; and with the confidence I have in Greene, I expect much from his being the successor; at least, I expect all his circumstances will permit. You seem to have mistaken me on the subject of this gentleman. When I spoke of prejudice, I did not suppose it to exist with you, but with Congress as a body; at least with a great part of them. The part they have taken in the affair, in my opinion, does honor to their impartiality. I hope they will support the officer appointed with a liberal confidence; his situation surrounded with difficulties will need support. Of your influence for this purpose I am too thoroughly persuaded of your patriotism, my dear sir, to doubt.

Be assured, my dear sir, the marks of your regard give me a sincere pleasure, and I shall be always happy to cultivate it, and to give you proofs of my affectionate attachment.

A. HAMILTON.

SCHUYLER TO HAMILTON.

SARATOGA, Oct. 19th, 1780.

DEAR SIR:

Your favor of the 12th inst., I had the pleasure to receive last night. Major Carlton, as you will have heard, has been down to the vicinity of this place, at the head of eight hundred British, about two hundred enlisted tories, and as many Indians. Fort Ann and Fort George fell into his hands; he burnt Kings and Queensborough townships, and the north part of this district, to within five miles of my house. The three months' men have evacuated Fort Edward, so that I have nobody between me and the enemy except two poor families, and about one hundred militia with me; on the 17th about one hundred and fifty of the enemy burnt Balstown, which lies about twenty miles below me and about twelve miles west of the road leading to Albany; another party is about eighteen miles east of me, where they have burnt about ten houses. The very valuable settlement of Schoharie, which lays west of Albany, was also entirely consumed on the 17th instant. Thus are we surrounded from every quarter, and the inhabitants flying down the country. I believe my turn will be in a few days, unless troops are sent up. Carlton is at Ticonderoga and Mount Independence, and waits a reinforcement, which is momentarily expected; my informant says he intends a second tour to destroy the settlements on this river, as far as to where the Mohawk River falls into it, which is about twenty-four miles below this. I most sincerely wish that some continental troops were hastened up for the protection of the county. I entreated Van Schaick to remain.

P. SCHUYLER.

Col. Hamilton, from
Gen'l Schuyler.

HARRISON TO HAMILTON.

October 27, 1780.

My Dear Hamilton:

We are only leaving Philadelphia. The most flattering attentions have been paid to Meade and myself, and such as would not permit us to progress before, unless we had shown ourselves entirely disregardless of the great world. Besides, motives of a public nature concurred to make us stay thus long. From all I have seen and heard, there is a good disposition in Congress to do all they can for the army and the public interest; and there are many very sensible men among them. In general, they are most warmly attached to the General; and his recommendations will have their weight while the same spirit prevails. It is said there has been infinitely more harmony among them for some time past, than has appeared since the first years of their appointment. I am not, however, without some apprehension, that if they proceed in the case of Lee, etc., the MONSTER (PARTY) may show itself again, and that we may have a second edition of the measures adopted in the instance of Deane. Our friends Sullivan and Carroll have been of great service: and gentlemen who are, or pretend to be, in the secrets of the cabinet, say they have contributed immeasurably, by their independent conduct, to destroy the EASTERN ALLIANCE. Bland is very clever, and without question wishes to push on in the true and right road. Grayson says this is the best Congress we have had since the first. Our dear Laurens respects many of the members: and General Greene's appointment, I believe, is entirely consonant to the wishes of Congress in general, though we have heard there were members much disposed, if facts had not been so obstinate, to excuse General Gates. The former is here, and I suppose will set out in a day or two. Meade and I will serve him all we can. We have done what we could already. Apropos, you delivered him my letter. Our finances are entirely deranged, and there is little or no money in the treasury. I believe they are a subject of much consideration and puzzlement

The supplies of the army are also matters of present attention, but I don't know what will be done. I hope we shall, by Christmas, have some clothing from the West Indies, if the moth have not destroyed it: a quantity, it is said, has been lying there. It is much to be wished that General Greene were at the South. The delegates from that quarter think the situation of Cornwallis delicate, and that by management, and a proper application and use of the force there, the late check given Furguson might be improved into the Earl's total defeat. This, I fear, is too much even to hope. The sending the Baron is considered, as far as I have heard, perfectly right, and Lee's corps give great satisfaction. I am just about to mount my horse, and therefore shall say but little more. Laurens will write unto you in a few days, I suppose, and communicate any new occurrences. My love to the lads of the family. The same to you. May you be long happy. My most respectful compliments to the General.

Most truly and affectionately,

ROB. H. HARRISON.

P. S. The Board have been absolutely too poor to procure parchment for the many promotions that have been required.

WASHINGTON TO HAMILTON.

1780.

DEAR HAMILTON:

I shall be obliged to you for the answer to the address, as soon as it is convenient to you. If we do not ride to the Point to see the fleet pass out, I am to have a conference with Count de Rochambeau, and the engineer, directly after breakfast, at which I wish you to be present.

I am sincerely and affectionately yours,

GEO. WASHINGTON.

Half-past, A. M.

LA FAYETTE TO HAMILTON.

November 22d, 1780.

Inclosed, my dear Hamilton, I send you a letter for Mr. De Marbois, wherein are contained two exemplaires of my dispatches to Doctor Franklin. In the hurry of our arrangement, I forgot to mention them to the General. Be pleased to give him a summary of their contents, to which I have added the southern news of yesterday. Tell him that, knowing from experience, how negligent we were in sending accounts to Europe, I take upon myself to forward such as may influence mediating powers in case of a negotiation.

I have made a calculation about boats, and think that if *we act upon a large scale* in the Staten Island expedition, we ought to have forty boats—about a thousand (the hundred artillery included) for the watering place and Richmond; your attack should have two hundred. In this calculation I put the staff and other officers, &c., twelve hundred men, or thirty per boat, makes forty boats; at least we ought not to have much less.

Let me know, my dear friend, if what we were speaking of last night, and the night before last, will be complied with. In consequence of what was said by the General, I was set at liberty to speak fully to G., who was charmed with the beauty and propriety of the thing. I am fully, fully of opinion that we would be very sorry not to go (at least conditionally), upon that plan, which perhaps will be as easy as any thing else: we may even say, il est beau même d'en tomber. Adieu; write me upon what scale, that I may prepare my troops. To-morrow we must carry your private affair. Show me your letter before you give it.

Yours,

LA FAYETTE.

HAMILTON TO WASHINGTON.

November 22, 1780.

DEAR SIR:

Some time last fall, when I spoke to your Excellency about going to the southward, I explained to you candidly my feelings with respect to military reputation; and how much it was my object to act a conspicuous part in some enterprise, that might perhaps raise my character as a soldier above mediocrity. You were so good as to say, you would be glad to furnish me with an occasion. When the expedition to Staten Island was afoot, a favorable one seemed to offer. There was a battalion without a field officer, the command of which, I thought, as it was accidental, might be given to me without inconvenience. I made an application for it through the Marquis, who informed me of your refusal on two principles: one, that the giving me a whole battalion might be a subject of dissatisfaction; the other, that if any accident should happen to me in the present state of your family, you would be embarrassed for the necessary assistance.

The project you now have in contemplation affords another opportunity. I have a variety of reasons, that press me to desire ardently to have it in my power to improve it. I take the liberty to observe, that the command may now be proportioned to my rank; and that the second objection ceases to operate, as, during the period of establishing our winter quarters, there will be a suspension of material business: besides which, my peculiar situation will, in any case, call me away from the army in a few days, and Mr. Harrison may be expected back early next month. My command may consist of one hundred and fifty or two hundred men, composed of fifty men of Major Gibbes' corps, fifty from Colonel Meigs' regiment, and fifty or a hundred more from the light infantry: Major Gibbes to be my Major. The hundred men from here may move on Friday morning towards ———, which will strengthen the appearances for Staten Island, to form a junction on the other side of the Passaic.

I suggest this mode to avoid the complaints that might arise from composing my party wholly of the Light Infantry, which might give umbrage to the officers of that corps, who, on this plan, can have no just subject for it.

The primary idea may be, if circumstances permit, to attempt with my detachment Bayard's Hill. Should we arrive early enough to undertake it, I should prefer it to any thing else, both for the brilliancy of the attempt in itself, and the decisive consequence of which its success would be productive. If we arrive too late to make this eligible (as there is reason to apprehend), my corps may form the van of one of the other attacks, and Bayard's Hill will be a pretext for my being employed in the affair, on a supposition of my knowing the ground, which is partly true. I flatter myself, also, that my military character stands so well in the army, as to reconcile the officers, in general, to the measure. All circumstances considered, I venture to say, any exceptions which might be taken, would be unreasonable.

I take this method of making the request, to avoid the embarrassment of a personal explanation. I shall only add, that however much I have the matter at heart, I wish your Excellency entirely to consult your own inclination, and not, from a disposition to oblige me, to do any thing that may be disagreeable to you. It will, nevertheless, make me singularly happy if your wishes correspond with mine.

LA FAYETTE TO HAMILTON.

PARAMUS, November 28, 1780.

DEAR HAMILTON:

Here I arrived last night, and am going to set out for Philadelphia. Gouvion goes straight to New Windsor, and by him I write to the General. I speak of Hand and Smith, whom I recommend, and add: "If, however, you were to cast your eye on

think, would suit better than any other in the
ı is, I confess, the officer whom I would like best
* * * *." Then I go on with the idea, that, at
:s, you deserve from him the preference; that
i are the greatest; I speak of a co-operation; of
:he family; and conclude, that on every public
unt I advise him to take you.
General's friendship and gratitude for you, my
both are greater than you perhaps imagine. I
s only to be told that something will suit you,
inks he can do it he certainly will. Before this
your friend, and very intimate friend, agreeably
the world. Since my second voyage, my senti-
ɜed to such a point the world knows nothing
· *both*, from want and from scorn of expressions,
you—Adieu.

Yours,

LA FAYETTE.

DE CORNY TO HAMILTON.

NEWPORT, 4th Dec., 1780.

of my health obliges me to request permission
ce, for as short a time as possible. I must, be-
ɜ, acquit myself of the double duty of thanking
rs with which you have honored me, and of
ders for my country. The satisfaction I feel of
accompany the Marquis de la Fayette, and of
his orders, the dispositions necessary to the
ɜnch army, which, as an interesting period of
be superior to that of returning to give our
leneral Washington new proofs of my zeal. I
honored in being reckoned one of your most

faithful comrades. I wish that happiness, success and glory follow you for ever.

I am, with everlasting attachment,

Your most humble and most obedient servant,

ESTRIS DE CORNY,

Lt. Colonel of Cavalry.

I pray you to present my friendship and full compliments to the General's family.

Col. Hamilton.

DU PORTAIL TO HAMILTON.

1780.

Je vous prie, mon cher Colonel, de lire les papiers ci-joints, ils vous mettront au fait de ce dont il s'agit. Nous avons déjà parlé ensemble de cet objet, ainsi il est inutile d'y revenir, il est certain qui si Son Excellence ne vous favorit point dans ces occasions, il nous est absolument impossible pour nous mêmes de nous tirer d'embarras. L'homme dont il est question, et qui est celui qui vous remettra cette lettre, sert lui-même à prouver le peu de ressources que nous avons dans ce genre. M. de Vellefranche en avait été si mécontent la campagne dernière, qu'il l'avait renvoyé, et n'en voulait plus entendre parler. L'impossibilité d'en trouver un autre le force de le reprendre il ne demande pas mieux assurement que de le changer, il fait tous ses efforts pour cela, il frappe à toutes les portes, mais inutilement —

Il est bien aisé de fairè de belles loix pour corriger les abus ; tout le monde voit les abus, tout le monde peut ce faire valoir en declamant d'autre, mais déterminer, presques les circonstances permettent, de corriger l'abus, en supprimant des moyens abusifs defaire une chose en substituer d'autres voila ceque les Reformateurs Croyans ne font pas toujours.

Vous expliquerez cela à qui il appartient, probablement vous

ne vous tromperez pas, au fait dont jè vous prie de donner à M. de Villefranche un mot comme vous l'avez donné à M. de Rochefontaine.

Je suis, mon cher Colonel, dans une totale défaute de livres anglais; j'en ai réluqué un sur la table aujourd 'hui, que le Colonel Harrison m'a dit que vous lisiez, mais je pense que vous ne lisez pas les deux volumes à la fois. Si vous pouviez m'en prêter un, vous obligiriez beaucoup votre tres humble serviteur.

DU PORTAIL.

Je vous priè de me renvoyer les papiers en cachets.

DU PORTAIL.

Col. Hamilton.

LA FAYETTE TO HAMILTON.

PHILADELPHIA, Dec. 9, 1780.

DEAR HAMILTON:

On my arrival at Paramus, I wrote a letter to the General, which Colonel Gouvion was to deliver to himself at New Windsor; so that more expedition had been made than you had thought. But the General having unfortunately altered his mind, and taken the road to Morristown, another misfortune threw Hand in his way; and remembering your advice on the occasion, he hastened to make him the proposition, and in consequence of it wrote his letter to Congress. From Paramus I went myself to the Lots, and from thence to Morristown, where I met the General; and knowing that my letter could not reach him under some days, I became regardless of your wishes, and made a verbal application in my own name, and about the same time that had been settled between us. I can't express to you, my dear friend, how sorry and disappointed I felt, when I knew from him, the General, that (greatly in consequence of your advice) he had settled the whole matter with Hand, and written for him to Congress. I confess I became warmer on the occasion

than you would perhaps have wished me to be; and I wanted the General to allow my sending an express, who would have overtaken the letter, as it was in the hands of General St. Clair: but the General did not think it to be a convenient measure; and, I confess, I may have been a little blinded on its propriety. I took care not to compromise you in this affair, when the General expressed a desire to serve you, and in a manner you would have been satisfied with. Now for the voyage to France.

Congress seem resolved that an *Envoy be sent in the way you wish*, and this was yesterday determined in the House. Next Monday the gentleman will be elected. I have already spoken to many members. I know of a number of voices that will be for you. This day, and that of to-morrow, will be by me employed in paying visits. As soon as the business is fixed upon, I shall send you an express. I think you ought to hold yourself in readiness, and in case you are called for, come with all possible speed; for you must go immediately, that you may have returned before the beginning of operations. If you go, my dear sir, I shall give you all public or private knowledge about Europe I am possessed of. Besides many private letters, that may introduce you to my friends, I intend giving you the *key* of the cabinet, as well as of the societies which influence them. In a word, my good friend, any thing in my power shall be entirely yours.

HAMILTON TO WASHINGTON.

ALBANY, Dec. 9, 1780.

DEAR SIR:

Mr. Rensselaer, who has the direction of the Armory here, tells me that the Board of War write him, they are unable to support it any longer on the present establishment for want of supplies, and propose to him to endeavor to have it carried on by contract. This he declares is impossible. The Armory must either continue on the present footing or cease. As far as I un-

derstand the matter, there is no objection to the terms in themselves, but a want of means to comply with them. If there is a want of means, the thing must be relinquished; but as it does not strike me that it can be more difficult to maintain an Armory here than elsewhere; and as I apprehend, in the present state of Arsenals, we shall stand in need of all the repairing we can do; I take the liberty, at Mr. Rensselaer's request, to mention the matter to you. I have seen the Armory myself. It appears to be in excellent order, and under a very ingenious and industrious man. I am told it has been conducted hitherto with great activity. Its situation is, in my opinion, advantageous. As there is a considerable body of troops always at West Point, and the army generally in its vicinity, the river is very convenient for transportation to and from the Armory; and, I should think, would be conducive to economy. This consideration strikes me as of importance. General Knox, however, will be the best judge of the usefulness of this Armory.

Mr. Rensselaer also mentions a considerable number of hides in the hands of persons here who had had orders from the Clothier-General not to dispose of them but by his order. He says he can no longer, but with great difficulty, procure leather for the public works on credit; and has requested me to mention this also to your Excellencey.

Mrs. Hamilton presents her respectful compliments to Mrs. Washington and yourself. After the holidays we shall be at head quarters.

I believe I imparted to you General Schuyler's wish that you could make it convenient to pay a visit with Mrs. Washington this winter. He and Mrs. Schuyler have several times repeated their inquiries and wishes. I have told them I was afraid your business would not permit you: if it should I shall be happy. You will enable me to let them know about what period it will suit. When the sleighing arrives, it will be an affair of two days up and two days down.

I have, etc.,
A. Hamilton.

WASHINGTON TO HAMILTON.

NEW-WINDSOR, Dec. 27, 1780.

DEAR HAMILTON:

Your letter of the 19th came safe by the Doctor, who set out this morning for Philadelphia.

I had, previous to the receipt of it, and without knowledge that the Board of War had given any direction respecting the Armory at Albany, requested the Governor to exempt (if he could do so with propriety) the citizens who were employed in it, from military services in case of alarm; and had written to General Clinton to direct the Quarter-Master to afford every assistance in his power to have the work repaired, and the business, as far as depended upon him, accelerated. I have now given order for delivery of such hides as Mr. Rensselaer shall find *absolutely* necessary for the use of the Armory.

Although a trip to Albany, on more accounts than one, would be perfectly agreeable to my wishes, I am so far from having it in my power, at this time, to fix a period for this gratification of them, that I have but small hope of accomplishing it at all this winter. There are some matters in suspense which may make a journey to Rhode Island necessary; but as the subject is not fit for a letter, I shall withhold the communication till I see you.

A second embarkation has taken place at New-York. The strength of the detachment, or its destination, are vaguely reported; and no certainty under whose command it goes. Arnold is said to be of it; from whence the connections conclude that New-Haven or New-London must infallibly be the object, while more rational conjecturers send it to the southward, from whence no late accounts have been received.

Mrs. Washington most cordially joins me in compliments of congratulation to Mrs. Hamilton and yourself, on the late happy event of your marriage, and in wishes to see you both at head quarters. We beg of you to present our respectful compliments to General Schuyler, his lady and family, and offer them strong

assurances of the pleasure we should feel at seeing them at New-Windsor.

With much truth, and great personal regard,
I am, dear Hamilton,
Your affectionate friend and servant,
G. WASHINGTON.

GREENE TO HAMILTON.

January 10, 1781.

MY DEAR COLONEL:

General Du Portail being on his way to the northward, gives me an opportunity to write you, which I should have done before, had not my letters to His Excellency contained as full information of the state of things as I was able to give, from the little time I had been in the department.

When I was appointed to this command, I expected to meet with many new and singular difficulties; but they infinitely exceed what I apprehended. This is really carrying on a war in an enemy's country; for you cannot establish the most inconsiderable magazine, or convey the smallest quantity of stores from one post to another, without being obliged to detach guards for their security. The division among the people is much greater than I imagined; and the whigs and tories persecute each other with little less than savage fury. There is nothing but murders and devastations in every quarter.

The loss of our army at Charleston, and the defeat of General Gates, has been the cause of keeping such shoals of militia on foot; and their service has been accompanied with such destruction and loss, as has almost laid waste the whole country. Nothing has been more destructive to the true interest of this country than the mode adopted for its defence. Two misfortunes happening one after the other, may have rendered it unavoidable the last season; but should it be continued, the inhabitants are inevitably ruined, and the resources of the country rendered incapable of affording support to an army competent to its defence.

Government here is infinitely more popular than to the northward; and there is no such thing as national character or national sentiment. The inhabitants are from all quarters of the globe, and as various in their opinions, projects, and schemes, as their manners and habits are from their early education. Those in office, from a vanity to be thought powerful, join in the measure of imposing upon the public respecting the strength and resources of these southern States: and while Congress, and the minister of France, are kept under this fatal delusion, I fear little support will be given to this department. The inhabitants are numerous; but they would be rather formidable abroad than at home. They are scattered over such a vast extent of country, that it is difficult to collect, and still more difficult to subsist them. There is a great spirit of enterprise among the black people; and those that come out as volunteers are not a little formidable to the enemy. There are, also, some particular corps under Sumpter, Marion, and Clarke, that are bold and daring; the rest of the militia are better calculated to destroy provisions than oppose the enemy.

At Philadelphia, and all my journey through the country, I endeavored to impress upon those in power, the necessity of sending clothing, and supplies of every kind, immediately to this army. But poverty was urged as a plea, in bar to every application. They all promised fair, but I fear will do but little: ability is wanting with some, and inclination with others.

Public credit is so totally lost, that private people will not give their aid, though they see themselves involved in one common ruin. It is my opinion that General Washington's influence will do more than all the assemblies upon the continent. I always thought him exceeding popular; but in many places he is little less than adored, and universally admired. His influence in this country might possibly effect something great. However, I found myself exceedingly well received, but more from being the friend of the General, than from my own merit.

This country wants, for its defence, a small but well appointed army, organized so as to move with great celerity. It should consist of about five thousand infantry, and from eight hundred

to a thousand horse. The enemy cannot maintain a larger force in this quarter, neither can we. The resources from the country are too small to subsist a large body of troops at any one point: and to draw supplies from a distance, through such long tracts of barren land, will be next to impossible, unless the business can be aided by a water transportation; and, in either case, it will be accompanied with an amazing expense. Could we get a superiority of horse, we could soon render it difficult for Lord Cornwallis to hold his position so far in the country. Nor should I be under any apprehensions, with a much inferior force to his, of taking post near him, if I had but such a body of horse. But the enemy's horse is so much superior to ours, that we cannot move a detachment towards them without hazarding its ruin.

When I came to the army, I found it in a most wretched condition. The officers had lost all confidence in the General, and the troops all their discipline. The troops had not only lost their discipline, but they were so addicted to plundering that they were a terror to the country. The General and I met at least upon very civil terms; and he expressed the greatest happiness at my being appointed to succeed him.

General Smallwood and he were not upon good terms; the former suspected the latter of having an intention to supplant him, but many think without reason. Others, again, are of opinion, his suspicions were well founded, and that Smallwood was not a little mortified at my being appointed to this department, and got outrageous when he heard Baron Steuben was coming also. How the matter was, I know not; certain it is, he is gone home, having refused to act under Baron Steuben, and declares he will not serve at all, unless Congress will give him a commission, dated at least two years before his appointment. This, I think, can never happen, notwithstanding his private merit, and the claim of the State. The battle of Camden here is represented widely different from what it is to the northward.

Colonel Williams thinks that none of the general officers were entitled to any extraordinary merit. The action was short, and succeeded by a flight, wherein every body took care of himself, as well officers as soldiers. Not an officer, except Major

Anderson, and one or two Captains, that brought off the field of battle a single soldier. The Colonel also says, that General Gates would have shared little more disgrace than is the common lot of the unfortunate, notwithstanding he was early off, if he had only halted at the Waxhaws or Charlotte—the first about sixty, and the last about eighty miles from the field of battle. What little incidents either give or destroy reputation! How many long hours a man may labor with an honest zeal in his country's service, and be disgraced for the most trifling error either in conduct or opinion! Hume very justly observes, no man will have reputation unless he is useful to society, be his merit or abilities what they may. Therefore, it is necessary for a man to be fortunate, as well as wise and just. The greater part of the loss of the Maryland line, in the action of Camden, happened after they began to retreat: indeed, this was the case with all the troops. What gave Smallwood such great reputation, was his halt at Salisbury, which was nothing but accident. You know there are great parties prevailing in the Maryland line; and perhaps his merit is not a little diminished on that account. I think him a brave and good officer, but too slow to effect any thing great in a department like this, where embarrassments are without number, and where nothing can be effected without the greatest promptitude and decision. This army is in such a wretched condition that I hardly know what to do with it. The officers have got such a habit of negligence, and the soldiers so loose and disorderly, that it is next to impossible to give it a military complexion. Without clothing, I am sure I shall never do it. I call no councils of war, and I communicate my intentions to very few. The army was posted at Charlotte when I came up with it; and in a council it had been determined to winter there; but the difficulty of procuring subsistence, and other reasons, induced me not only to take a new position, but to make an entire new disposition. All this I effected by a single order, having first made the necessary inquiry respecting the new positions, by sending a man to examine the ground and other requisites. If I cannot inspire the army with confidence and respect by an independent conduct, I foresee it will

be impossible to instil discipline and order among the troops. General Leslie has arrived, and joined Lord Cornwallis, whose force now is more than three times larger than ours. And we are subsisting ourselves by our own industry; and I am not without hopes of forming something like a magazine. I am laboring also to get clothing from every quarter. Baron Steuben is in Virginia, and is indefatigable in equipping and forwarding the troops from that State. I left General Guest in Maryland for the same purpose; but I have got nothing from there yet, nor do I expect much for months to come. The North Carolina State have such a high opinion of the militia, that I don't expect they will ever attempt to raise a single continental soldier; notwithstanding the most sensible among them will acknowledge the folly of employing militia.

But I must have tried your patience, and therefore will make a full stop concerning matters in this department, and inquire how you go on to the northward.

* * * * * * *

I beg my compliments to General Washington's family, to General Knox and his family, and all other of my acquaintances.

I shall be exceedingly obliged to you if you will communicate to me, with great freedom, every thing worthy of note that is said or respects this department.

Yours affectionately,

N. GREENE.

To Col. Alexander Hamilton.

MEADE TO HAMILTON.

January 13, 1781.

What shall I say, or think, of my dear friend Hamilton? Not a single line from him since we parted. I will not, however, charge you, my dear fellow, with not having done your duty, or, at least, of a want of inclination to do it: you may

have complied fully with your promise, and your letters miscarried: mine probably have shared the same fate. This is the third since I got home. The first was writ shortly after General Greene's arrival at Richmond, and committed to his care; the second, telling you I was married, had not so favorable a prospect of conveyance; and this must take its chance.

Arnold, you knew, was coming here. He has really been here, and, with shame be it said, marched twenty-five miles, and back, without having a single musket fired at him: but let me observe, in justice to the people at large, that there are fewer disaffected by far, in this State, than any other in the Union; and that the people turn out with the utmost cheerfulness. The misfortune, on the present invasion, was, that in the confusion the arms were sent *every where*, and no timely plan laid to put them into the hands of the men who were assembling. The Baron has, no doubt, given the General the particulars of the whole affair. Should he not have done it, I must refer you for them to Rivington's paper: he can hardly be himself, and say any thing on the subject that ought not to be credited. The damage, however, done by the enemy is not considerable, and much less than might have been expected from them. My friends have suffered. I have often felt much pain, my dear Hamilton, at scenes of the kind to the northward, but never in so great a degree as on this occasion. The nearest and dearest to me were within reach of the enemy; wife, mother, brother, sister; and all have shared deeply in the distress; and, indeed, many of them were in personal danger, and my best friend of the number; myself of course somewhat exposed. You possess a heart that can feel for me; you have a female, too, that you love. * * * * * After placing her, with at least twenty other females and children, at a safe distance, I immediately returned, and joined the Baron about the time the enemy left Richmond, in order to render him all the aid I could, being intimately acquainted with the country for many miles in the vicinity of the enemy: and on their return down the river, I left him to go in pursuit of a residence for a

favorite brother who was driven from his home, and obliged to attend to his wife and a family of little children.

* * * * * * *

This gives me an opening to speak of my return to the army. I have been long wishing your advice in full on the occasion. You are acquainted with the arguments I have used in favor of my stay here. * * * * * I have not, however, as yet, thrown off the uniform, but I am inclined to believe it must be the case. If we meet not again, my dear Hamilton, as brother aids, I still flatter myself that, in the course of time, we shall meet as the sincerest of friends. If you have not already writ to me, my dear fellow, let me entreat you, when you go about it, to fill a sheet in close hand. Say all about yourself first, and next, what may be most interesting and new to me, for I have not heard a syllable from camp since I left it. I wrote to the "Old Secretary" while he was in Virginia, but could not hear from him. Tell him that I suffered not a little on his account, for I conceived, for a long time, that his cousin's unlucky fall from his horse had happened to him: such an opinion had like to have carried me to Alexandria.

I am under the necessity of concluding, but first let me present my respects to the General and Mrs. Washington, my sincerest esteem to the lads of the family, and every officer of the army whom you know I regard.

* * * * * * *

Your sincere friend,

R. R. MEADE.

SCHUYLER TO HAMILTON.

ALBANY, January 25, 1781.

DEAR SIR:

Yesterday I received your favor of the sixteenth instant. It affords me pleasure to learn that the Pennsylvania line is reduced to order; but we in this quarter are on the point of

experiencing a similar commotion. Two regiments threaten to march to head quarters, unless some money is paid them, the certificates for the depreciation expedited, and, in future, better supplied with provisions. Yesterday, about three thousand bushels of wheat, six hundred pounds worth of beef, and three or four thousand dollars, were subscribed. I am in hopes we shall procure what will afford each man about ten dollars; and I have some hopes that this, with a little management, will render them tolerably quiet.

* * * * * * *

Entreat the General and his lady to accept my best wishes. Do not forget to remember me to Colonels Harrison and Tilghman. Adieu.

I am, dear Sir,
Most affectionately,
Yours, etc., etc.,
PH: SCHUYLER.

Colonel Hamilton.

SCHUYLER TO HAMILTON.

ALBANY, February 5, 1781.

DEAR SIR:

* * * * * * *

The plan you mention for supplying the armies in America, I should be exceedingly happy to see attempted; but I fear Congress will not venture on it, although they should be convinced of its eligibility. In the course of last year, I proposed it repeatedly to individual members, who generally approved, and once or twice took occasion to mention it in Congress; but in the House no one dared to give his opinion. I am persuaded, if it was adopted, that a saving, at present almost inconceivable, would be induced, and an order and economy in the public expenditures, which, whilst it would reconcile the minds of men to bear the public burthens with alacrity, would effectually eradicate

the fears which too generally prevail, that we shall sink under the enormous weight of our expenses. * * *

I am, my dear Sir,

Very affectionately,

Yours, etc., etc.,

PH: SCHUYLER.

Colonel Hamilton.

HAMILTON TO SCHUYLER.

HEAD QUARTERS, NEW WINDSOR, February 18, 1781.

MY DEAR SIR:

Since I had the pleasure of writing you last, an unexpected change has taken place in my situation. I am no longer a member of the General's family. This information will surprise you, and the manner of the change will surprise you more. Two days ago, the General and I passed each other on the stairs. He told me he wanted to speak to me. I answered that I would wait upon him immediately. I went below, and delivered Mr. Tilghman a letter to be sent to the commissary, containing an order of a pressing and interesting nature.

Returning to the General, I was stopped on the way by the Marquis de La Fayette, and we conversed together about a minute on a matter of business. He can testify how impatient I was to get back, and that I left him in a manner which, but for our intimacy, would have been more than abrupt. Instead of finding the General, as is usual, in his room, I met him at the head of the stairs, where, accosting me in an angry tone, "Colonel Hamilton," said he, "you have kept me waiting at the head of the stairs these ten minutes. I must tell you, sir, you treat me with disrespect." I replied, without petulancy, but with decision, "I am not conscious of it, sir; but since you have thought it necessary to tell me so, we part." "Very well, sir," said he, "if it be your choice," or something to this effect, and we separated. I sincerely believe my absence, which gave so much umbrage, did not last two minutes.

In less than an hour after, Tilghman came to me in the General's name, assuring me of his great confidence in my abilities, integrity, usefulness, etc.; and of his desire, in a candid conversation, to heal a difference which could not have happened but in a moment of passion. I requested Mr. Tilghman to tell him—1st. That I had taken my resolution in a manner not to be revoked. 2d. That, as a conversation could serve no other purpose than to produce explanations, mutually disagreeable, though I certainly would not refuse an interview if he desired it, yet I would be happy if he would permit me to decline it. 3d. That though determined to leave the family, the same principles which had kept me so long in it, would continue to direct my conduct towards him when out of it. 4th. That, however, I did not wish to distress him, or the public business, by quitting him before he could derive other assistance by the return of some of the gentlemen who were absent. 5th. And that, in the mean time, it depended on him, to let our behavior to each other be the same as if nothing had happened. He consented to decline the conversation, and thanked me for my offer of continuing my aid in the manner I had mentioned.

I have given you so particular a detail of our difference, from the desire I have to justify myself in your opinion. Perhaps you may think I was precipitate in rejecting the overture made by the General to an accommodation. I must assure you, my dear sir, it was not the effect of resentment: it was the deliberate result of maxims I had long formed for the government of my own conduct.

always disliked the office of an aid-de-camp, as having in it a kind of personal dependence. I refused to serve in this capacity with two Major-Generals, at an early period of the war. Infected, however, with the enthusiasm of the times, an idea of the General's character overcame my scruples, and induced me to *accept his invitation* to enter into his family * * *. It has been often with great difficulty that I have prevailed upon myself not to renounce it; but while, from motives of public utility, I was doing violence to my feelings, I was always determined, if there should ever happen a breach between us, never to consent

to an accommodation. I was persuaded, that when once that nice barrier, which marked the boundaries of what we owed to each other, should be thrown down, it might be propped again, but could never be restored.

The General is a very honest man. His competitors have slender abilities, and less integrity. His popularity has often been essential to the safety of America, and is still of great importance to it. These considerations have influenced my past conduct respecting him, and will influence my future. I think it is necessary he should be supported.

His estimation in your mind, whatever may be its amount, I am persuaded has been formed on principles, which a circumstance like this cannot materially effect: but if I thought it could diminish your frienship for him, I should almost forego the motives that urge me to justify myself to you. I wish what I have said, to make no other impression than to satisfy you I have not been in the wrong. It is also said in confidence, as a public knowledge of the breach would, in many ways, have an ill effect. It will probably be the policy of both sides to conceal it, and cover the separation with some plausible pretext. I am importuned by such of my friends as are privy to the affair, to listen to a reconciliation; but my resolution is unalterable.

As I cannot think of quitting the army during the war, I have a project of re-entering into the artillery, by taking Lieutenant-Colonel Forrest's place, who is desirous of retiring on half-pay. I have not, however, made up my mind upon this head, as I should be obliged to come in the youngest Lieutenant-Colonel instead of the eldest, which I ought to have been by natural succession, had I remained in the corps; and, at the same time, to resume studies relative to the profession, which, to avoid inferiority, must be laborious.

If a handsome command in the campaign in the light infantry should offer itself, I shall balance between this and the artillery. My situation in the latter would be more solid and permanent; but as I hope the war will not last long enough to make it progressive, this consideration has the less force. A command for the campaign, would leave me the winter to pros-

ecute studies relative to my future career in life * * *. I have written to you on this subject with all the freedom and confidence to which you have a right, and with an assurance of the interest you take in all that concerns me.

Very sincerely and affectionately,
I am, dear Sir,
Your most obedient servant,
A. HAMILTON.

General Schuyler.

LAURENS TO HAMILTON.

1781.

I am indebted to you, my dear Hamilton, for two letters; the first from Albany, as masterly a piece of cynicism as ever was penned; the other from Philadelphia, dated the second March: in both, you mention a design of retiring, which makes me exceedingly unhappy. I would not wish to have you, for a moment, withdrawn from the public service: at the same time, my friendship for you, and knowledge of your value to the United States, make me most ardently desire, that you should fill only the first offices of the Republic. I was flattered with an account of your being elected a delegate from New-York, and am much mortified not to hear it confirmed by yourself. I must confess to you, that, at the present stage of the war, I should prefer your going into Congress, and from thence becoming a minister plenipotentiary for peace, to your remaining in the army, where the dull system of seniority, and the *tableau*, would prevent you from having the important commands to which you are entitled: but at any rate I will not have you renounce your rank in the army, unless you entered the career above mentioned. Your private affairs cannot require such immediate and close attention. You speak like a *paterfamilias* surrounded with a numerous progeny.

I had, in fact, resumed the black project, as you were inform-

ed, and urged the matter very strenuously, both to our privy council and legislative body; but I was out-voted, having only reason on my side, and being opposed by a triple-headed monster, that shed the baneful influence of avarice, prejudice, and pusillanimity, in all our assemblies. It was some consolation to me, however, to find that philosophy and truth had made some little progress since my last effort, as I obtained twice as many suffrages as before.

DUKE DE LAUZUN TO HAMILTON.

A LEBANON, le 26 Fevrier, 1781.

Permettez moi, Monsieur, de vous adresser une lettre pour le Marquis de Lafayette, ne sachant où il est. Je ne veux point importuner son Excellence dans un moment où tant d'affaires l'accablent. M. de Closen, Aid-de-Camp de M. le Comte de Rochambeau, lui porte des dépêches importantes; M. le Marquis de Laval parait destiné à commander un détachement de Grenadiers, et chasseurs de l'Armée Française. Je vous supplie de vouloir bien rappeler au Général, que de quelque maniere qu'il me juge util, je me trouverai heureux d'être employé, et qu'il veuille bien témoigner à M. de Rochambeau que ce choix ne lui sera pas désagréable.

Recevez les excuses de mon Importunité, et les assurances de tous les sentiments d'estime et de considération, avec les quels j'ai l'honneur d'être, Monsieur, votre très humble et très obeissant serviteur.

DE LAUZUN.

HARRISON TO HAMILTON.

NEW WINDSOR, March 26, 1781.

I came here, my dear Hamilton, on Friday night, to bid adieu to the General, to you, and to my other friends, as a mili-

tary man, and regret much that I have not had the happiness of seeing you. To-morrow I am obliged to depart; and it is possible our separation may be for ever. But be this as it may, it can only be with respect to our persons; for as to affection, mine for you will continue to my latest breath. This event will probably surprise you; but from your knowledge of me, I rely you will conclude, at the instant, that no light considerations would have taken me from the army; and I think I might safely have rested the matter here. However, as the friendship between us gives you a claim to something more, and as I am not indifferent about character, and shall be anxious to have the esteem of all who are good, and virtuously great, I shall detail to you, my friend, the more substantial reasons which have led to my present conduct. I go from the army, then, because I have found, on examination, that my little fortune, earned by an honest and hard industry, was becoming embarrassed—to attend to the education of my children—to provide, if possible, for the payment of a considerable sum of sterling money and interest, with which I stand charged, on account of the land I lately received from my honored father, for equality of partition between myself and two brothers—to save a house which he had begun, and which, without instant attention, would be ruined, or at least greatly injured—to provide, if possible, for the payment of goods, which far exceed any profits I can make from my estate—and because the State of Maryland, in a flattering manner, have been pleased to appoint me to a place, very respectable in its nature, corresponding with my former, and very interesting to my whole future life and support. They have appointed me to the Chair of their Supreme Court. These, my friend, are the motives to my present resolution. My own feelings are satisfied on the occasion, though I cannot but regret parting with the most valuable acquaintances I have; and I hope they will justify me most fully to you, my Hamilton, especially when you consider, besides, the time I have been in service, and the compensation I have received. I wish, seriously, I had been sooner apprised of the good intentions of the State towards me, for reasons which will occur to you. They were but very lately known, and I was

no sooner possessed of them, than I communicated the matter (that I should leave the army) to the General—having found, on inquiry, it was only in my power to accept the offer of the Chair, or decline it for ever, as the filling it had become a measure of immediate necessity; and there were other gentlemen, both of ability and merit, who had been mentioned for it, and who would probably have willingly accepted it. You are now to pardon me for this long relation, so very personal. You must do it, as what I owed to your friendship produced it, and as it is my hope and wish to stand fair in your opinion and esteem.

I proceed to tell you that I live in Charles County, Maryland, where I should be peculiarly happy to see you: but as I can have but little hopes of being gratified in this, let me have the next pleasure to it, the favor of a letter now and then; in which, write of matters personally interesting to yourself, as they will be so to me. Present me most respectfully to your lady, to General and Mrs. Schuyler. My best wishes attend you all. Adieu.

Yours in haste, most affectionately,

ROBT. H. HARRISON.

Colonel Hamilton.

LA FAYETTE TO HAMILTON.

ELK, April 10, 1781.

Where is, for the present, my dear Hamilton? This question is not a mere affair of curiosity. It is not even wholly owing to the tender sentiments of my friendship. But motives both of a public and private nature conspire in making me wish that your woe be not accomplished. Perhaps you are at head quarters—perhaps at Albany; at all events, I'll tell you my history. Had the French fleet come in, Arnold was ours. The more certain it was, the greater my disappointment has been; at last it has become necessary for them to return to Rhode Island. I think

they have exerted themselve for the common good, and this has been a comfort in our misfortune.

Having luckily arrived at Elk by water, which at first I had no right to expect, I have received the General's letters. If you are at head quarters, you will have seen my correspondence with the General; if not, I tell you that I am ordered to the southern army, and the General thinks that the army under his immediate command will remain inactive. After a march of forty days, we will arrive at a time when the heat of the season will put an end to operations. This detachment is so circumstanced as to make it very inconvenient for officers and men to proceed. Before we arrive, we shall perhaps be reduced to five or six hundred men. There will be no light infantry formed—no attack against New-York—none of those things which had flattered my mind. If a corps is sent to the southward by land, it ought to have been the Jersey line, because if we weaken ourselves, New-York will be out of the question.

Monsieur Destouches will, I think, propose to the General to send to Philadelphia l'Eveillé and all the frigates; these, with the frigates now at Philadelphia, would carry fifteen hundred men to whatever part of the continent the General would think proper. We could then go to Morristown, there to form a new corps of light infantry upon the principles at first intended, and embarking in the first days of May, we could be at Wilmington, Georgetown, or any where else, sooner than we can now be by land. I would have the battalions composed of six companies; Colonels employed—Webb, Sprout, Huntington, Olney, Hill, Barber, Gimat, *Laurens;* Majors Willet, Fish, Gibbes, Inspector Smith, and another; Brigadier Generals Huntington and Scamell, and a good corps of artillerists under * * * * * *. My good friend, you would be more important at head quarters; but if you don't stay there, you know what you have promised to me. Adieu. Write often and long letters. It is probable I will be in the southern wilderness until the end of the war, far from head quarters, from the French army, from my correspondence with France; but the whole good I could have operated,

in this last instance, must have taken place by this time. My best respects and affectionate compliments wait on Mrs. Hamilton.

Most friendly yours,

LA FAYETTE.

LA FAYETTE TO HAMILTON.

April 15, 1781. SUSQUEHANNA.

DEAR HAMILTON:

You are so sensible a fellow, that you certainly can explain to me what is the matter that New-York is given up; that our letters to France go for nothing; that while the French are coming, I am going. This last matter gives great uneasiness to the Minister of France. All this is not comprehensible to me, who, having been long from head quarters, have lost the course of intelligence.

Have you left the family, my dear sir? I suppose so; but from love to the General, for whom you know my affection, I ardently wish it was not the case; many, many reasons conspire to this desire of mine. But if you do leave it, and if I go to exile, come and partake it with me.

Yours,

L. F.

COL. TILGHMAN TO HAMILTON.

HEAD QUARTERS, 27th April, 1781.

MY DEAR HAMILTON:

Between me and thee there is a gulf, or I should not have been thus long without seeing you. My faith is strong, but not strong enough to attempt walking upon the waters. You must not suppose from my dealing so much in Scripture phrases, that I am either drunk with religion or with wine, though had I been

inclined to the latter, I might have found a jolly companion in my Lord, who came here yesterday.

We have not a word of news. Whenever any arrives worth communicating, and good, you shall have it instantly—if bad, I will not promise so much dispatch.

I must go over and see you soon, for I am not yet weaned from you, nor do I desire to be. I will not present so cold words as compliments to Mrs. Hamilton. She has an equal share of the best wishes of

Your most affectionate,

TILGHMAN.

HAMILTON TO WASHINGTON.

DE PEYSTER'S POINT, April 27, 1781.

SIR:

I imagine your Excellency has been informed, that in consequence of the resolution of Congress for granting commissions to Aid-de-Camps appointed under the former establishment, I have obtained one of Lieutenant Colonel in the army of the United States, bearing rank since the 1st of March, 1777.

It is become necessary to me to apply to your Excellency, to know in what manner you foresee you will be able to employ me in the ensuing campaign. I am ready to enter into activity whenever you think proper, though I am not anxious to do it till the army takes the field, as before that period I perceive no object.

Unconnected as I am with any regiment, I can have no other command than in a light corps; and I flatter myself my pretensions to this are good.

Your Excellency knows, I have been in actual service since the beginning of '76. I began in the line, and had I continued there, I ought, in justice, to have been more advanced in rank than I now am. I believe my conduct, in the different capacities in which I have acted, has appeared to the officers of the army,

in general, such as to merit their confidenee and esteem; and I cannot suppose them to be so ungenerous as not to see me with pleasure put into a situation still to exercise the disposition I have always had of being useful to the United States. I mention these things, only to show that I do not apprehend the same difficulties can exist in my case (which is peculiar), that have opposed the appointments to commands of some other officers, not belonging to what is called the line. Though the light infantry is chiefly formed, yet being detached to the southward, I take it for granted there will be a vanguard by detachment formed for this army.

I have the honor to be,
Very respectfully,
Your Excellency's most ob't serv't,
A. HAMILTON.

To General Washington.

WASHINGTON TO HAMILTON.

NEW WINDSOR, April 27, 1781.

DEAR SIR:

Your letter of this date has not a little embarrassed me. You must remember the ferment in the Pennsylvania line last campaign, occasioned by the appointment of Major M'Pherson; and you know the uneasiness which at this moment exists among the eastern officers, on account of the commands conferred upon Colonel Gimat and Major Galvan, although it was the result of absolute necessity.

Should circumstances admit of the formation of another advanced corps, of which I see very little prospect, from present appearances, it can be but small, and must be composed almost entirely of eastern troops: and to add to the discontents of the officers of those lines, by the further appointment of an officer of your rank to the command of it, or in it, would, I am certain,

involve me in a difficulty of a very disagreeable and delicate nature; and might, perhaps, lead to consequences more serious than it is easy to imagine. While I adhere firmly to the right of making such appointments as you request, I am at the same time obliged to reflect, that it will not do to push that right too far; more especially in a service like ours, and at a time so critical as the present.

I am convinced that no officer can, with justice, dispute your merit and abilities. The opposition heretofore made, has not been for the want of those qualifications in the gentlemen who are, and have been, the objects of discontent. The officers of the line contend, without having reference to particular persons, that it is a hardship and reflection upon them, to introduce brevet officers into commands (of some permanency), in which there are more opportunities of distinguishing themselves than in the line of the army at large, and with the men they have had the trouble to discipline and to prepare for the field.

My principal concern arises from an apprehension, that you will impute my refusal of your request to other motives, than those I have expressed; but I beg you to be assured, I am only influenced by the reasons which I have mentioned.

I am, dear Sir,

Your obedient, humble servant,

G. WASHINGTON.

Lieutenant-Colonel Hamilton.

SCHUYLER TO HAMILTON.

SARATOGA, April 29, 1781.

MY DEAR SIR:

* * * * * * *

The troops here are destitute of meat, and I fear will abandon the post; the inhabitants in consternation, and preparing to fly, since they have heard of the arrival of some of the enemy's shipping at Crown Point. Flour we can procure for the present, I

having, on my own account, purchased one hundred barrels about twelve miles from this. If beef is sent up so as to enable the troops to remain, an engineer will be absolutely necessary to construct two or three small fortifications.

* * * * * * *

I am, dear Sir,

Most affectionately and sincerely,

Yours, etc., etc.,

PH. SCHUYLER.

Col. Hamilton.

HAMILTON TO ROBERT MORRIS.

April 30, 1781.

SIR:

I was among the first who were convinced that an administration, by single men, was essential to the proper management of the affairs of this country. I am persuaded, now, it is the only resource we have, to extricate ourselves from the distresses which threaten the subversion of our cause. It is palpable, that the people have lost all confidence in our public councils; and it is a fact, of which I dare say you are as well apprised as myself, that our friends in Europe are in the same disposition. I have been in a situation that has enabled me to obtain a better idea of this than most others; and I venture to assert, that the Court of France will never give half the succors to this country, while Congress hold the reins of administration in their own hands, which they would grant, if these were intrusted to individuals of established reputation, and conspicuous for probity, abilities, and fortune.

With respect to ourselves, there is so universal and rooted a diffidence of the government, that, if we could be assured the future measures of Congress would be dictated by the most perfect wisdom and public spirit, there would be still a necessity for a change in the forms of our administration, to give a new spring and current to the passions and hopes of the people.

To me it appears evident, that an executive ministry, composed of men with the qualifications I have described, would speedily restore the credit of government abroad and at home—would induce our allies to greater exertions in our behalf—would inspire confidence in moneyed men in Europe, as well as in America, to lend us those sums of which it may be demonstrated we stand in need, from the disproportion of our national wealth to the expenses of the war.

I hope, sir, you will not consider it as a compliment, when I assure you that I heard, with the greatest satisfaction, of your nomination to the department of finance. In a letter of mine, last summer, to Mr. Duane, urging, among other things, the plan of an executive ministry, I mentioned you as the person who ought to fill that department. I know of no other in America, who unites so many advantages; and of course every impediment to your acceptance, is to me a subject of chagrin. I flatter myself Congress will not preclude the public from your services by an obstinate refusal of reasonable conditions; and, as one deeply interested in the event, I am happy in believing you will not easily be discouraged from undertaking an office, by which you may render America, and the world, no less a service than the establishment of American independence! 'Tis by introducing order into our finances—by restoring public credit—not by gaining battles, that we are finally to gain our object. 'Tis by putting ourselves in a condition to continue the war—not by temporary, violent, and unnatural efforts to bring it to a decisive issue, that we shall, in reality, bring it to a speedy and successful one. In the frankness of truth I believe, sir, you are the man best capable of performing this great work.

In expectation that all difficulties will be removed, and that you will ultimately act on terms you approve, I take the liberty to submit to you some ideas, relative to the objects of your department. I pretend not to be an able financier: it is a part of administration which has been least in my way, and, of course, has least occupied my inquiries and reflections. Neither have I had leisure or materials to make accurate calculations. I have been obliged to depend on memory for important facts, for

want of the authorities from which they are drawn. With all these disadvantages, my plan must necessarily be crude and defective; but if it may be a basis for something more perfect, or if it contains any hints that may be of use to you, the trouble I have taken myself, or may give you, will not be misapplied. At any rate, the confidence I have in your judgment, assures me that you will receive, with pleasure, communications of this sort: if they contain any thing useful, they will promote your views and the public benefit; if not, the only evil is the trouble of reading them; and the best informed will frequently derive lights, even from reveries of projectors and quacks. There is scarcely any plan so bad as not to have something good in it. I trust mine to your candor without further apology; you will at least do justice to my intention.

The first step towards determining what ought to be done in the finances of this country, is to estimate, in the best manner we can, its capacity for revenue; and the proportion between what it is able to afford, and what it stands in need of, for the expenses of its civil and military establishments. There occur to me two ways of doing this: 1st. By examining what proportion the revenues of other countries have borne to their stock of wealth, and applying the rule to ourselves, with proper allowance for the difference of circumstances. 2d. By comparing the result of this rule with the product of taxes in those States which have been the most in earnest in taxation. The reason for having recourse to the first method is, that our own experience of our faculties in this respect, has not been sufficiently clear, or uniform, to admit of a certain conclusion: so that it will be more satisfactory to judge of them by a general principle, drawn by the example of other nations, compared with what we have effected ourselves, than to rely entirely upon the latter.

The nations with whose wealth and revenues we are best acquainted, are France, Great Britain, and the United Provinces. The real wealth of a nation, consisting in its labor and commodities, is to be estimated by the sign of that wealth—its circulating cash. There may be times when, from particular accidents, the quantity of this may exceed or fall short of a just representative;

but it will turn again to a proper level, and, in the general course of things, maintain itself in that state.

The circulation of France is almost wholly carried on in the precious metals; and its current cash is estimated at from fifteen to sixteen hundred millions of livres. The net revenue of the kingdom, the sum which actually passes into the public coffers, is somewhere between three hundred and sixty and four hundred millions, about one fourth of the whole of its currency. An estimate of the wealth of this nation is liable to less fallacy than of that of the other two, as it makes little use of paper credit, which may be artificially increased, and even supported, a long time beyond its natural bounds.

It is supposed that the gross sum extracted from the people by the collectors of the revenue, may be one-third more than that which goes into the treasury: but as their exactions are excessive, and fall too heavy on particular orders, who are by that means reduced to indigence and misery, it is to be inferred, that, with moderate and reasonable expenses of collection, the present revenue is as great as the kingdom can well afford, from its present quantity of wealth.

The circulating cash of Great Britain, in paper and specie, may be stated at about forty millions of pounds sterling. Mr. Hume supposes it to have been, at the time he wrote his Essay on the Balance of Trade, about thirty millions. Other writers have carried it to fifty, and it is probably in a medium that we shall find the truth. I do not include in this, the whole amount of Bank notes, Exchequer bills, India bonds, etc. etc.; but only such part as is really employed in common circulation, and performs the offices of current cash. In '75, by Dr. Price's statement, the net revenue of Great Britain was ten millions—that is, about one-fourth of its current cash, as in France.

I have never met with any calculation that might be depended upon, of the current cash of the Seven Provinces. Almost the whole of their coin, as well as large quantities of plate and bullion, are shut up in the Bank of Amsterdam. The real wealth of the Bank is believed to be about fifteen millions sterling; though, upon the strength of this fund, it has a credit almost un-

ed, that answers all the purposes of cash in trade. As Dutch, by their prudent maxims, have commonly the rate of ange throughout Europe in their favor, and a considerable ace of trade, the use of paper credit (which, in part, also de- ls upon the particular nature of their Banks) has not the tendency with them, as in England, to banish the precious ls. We may therefore suppose these to be here, as in ce, the true sign of the wealth of the nation. If to the fif- millions in Bank, we add two millions of specie for the l circulation and various transactions of business, we , I imagine, have nearly the true stock of wealth of the ed Provinces. Their revenues amount to something more four millions, and bear the some proportion to the stock which they are drawn, as those of France and England. I ess, however, the data, in their case, are not sufficiently as- ined to permit us to rely equally on the result. From e three examples we may venture to deduce this general rule, at the proportion of revenue which a nation is capable of ding, is about one-fourth of its circulating cash, so far as is a just representative of its labor and commodities.

This is only applicable to commercial countries, because, in e which are not so, the circulating cash is not an adequate . A great part of domestic commerce is carried on by bar- and the State must receive a part of its dues in the labor commodities themselves. The proportion, however, of the nues of such a State to the aggregate of its labor and commo- s, ought to be the same as in the case of trading nations to circulating cash; with this difference, that the difficulty of ction and transportation, the waste and embezzlement in- rable from this mode of revenue, would make the real ad- age and ultimate gain to the State, infinitely less than when public dues are paid in cash.

When I say that one-fourth part of its stock of wealth is revenue which a nation is capable of affording to the gov- ment, I must be understood in a qualified, not in an abso- sense. It would be presumptuous to fix a precise boundary e ingenuity of financiers, or to the patience of the people:

but this we may safely say, that taxation is already carried, in the nations we have been speaking of, to an extent which does not admit of a very considerable increase without a proportionable increase of industry. This suffices for a standard to us; and we may proceed to the application.

From a comparison of the several estimates I have seen, of the quantity of current cash in this country previous to the war (specie and paper), I have settled my opinion of the amount at thirty millions of dollars, of which about eight might have been in specie: one-fourth of this, by analogy, was at that time the proper revenue of these States; that is, seven and a half millions of dollars.

As taxation, however, has, by slow gradations, been carried to an extreme in those countries which I have chosen as examples, that would not be, but in a course of time, practicable in this, where the people have been so little accustomed to taxes, it may be doubted whether it would be possible to raise the same proportion of revenue here. The object of the war, I imagine, would supply the want of habit, and reconcile the minds of the people to paying to the utmost of their abilities, provided the taxes were judiciously imposed, and the revenues wisely administered. Besides this, there is a circumstance in our favor, which puts it in the power of government to raise an equal proportion of revenue without burthening the lower classes of the people in the same degree as in Europe. This circumstance is the much greater equality of fortunes, by which means men, in this country, may be made to contribute to the public exigencies in a much juster proportion to their property; and this is in fact the case. In France the rich have gained so entire an ascendant, that there is a constant sacrifice of the ease and happiness of the people to their avarice and luxury: their burthens are in no proportion to those of the middle order, and still less to those of the poor. In England and Holland the case, though not altogether, is in a great measure the same. There are also men of very large moneyed capitals, which were either formerly exempt from taxes by being in the public funds, or, having no visible representative for taxation to operate upon,

enjoy virtually the same advantages. But if, at the commencement of the war, the ability of these States for revenue may be rated at seven and a half millions of dollars, when the amount of its circulating cash was thirty millions, now that it is reduced more than one-half in real value, to what revenue are they to be supposed equal at this time? I should judge about one-fifth less, and not more.

The diminution of our circulating cash is principally artificial. It is true, our foreign commerce has declined by the war, but our domestic commerce has increased. I know of no good reason to believe, that the quantity of labor and commodities have been materially diminished. Our exports have lessened, but our internal consumption has augmented. The men employed in the army, and in the departments connected with it, consume and waste three times as much as the same number of men in civil life. A number of husbandmen have been taken from their ploughs into military service; but the progress of our natural population has, in part, supplied their place; and the demands of the war have increased individual industry. The great influx of money, at first operated upon the avarice of the people, and, for a long time, served also as a stimulus to industry, which taxation has since kept up on the principle of necessity. Notwithstanding the demands and competitions of two armies for supplies, we see that corn, which is the staple of these middle States, is cheaper than for some years before the war; a strong argument of plenty.

We may infer from all this, that we stand in need now of nearly the same quantity of medium for our circulation as before the war. The depreciation of the money below the standard, is to be attributed to a want of confidence rather than to a decay of resources. We find the people, in some of the States, distressed to pay their taxes, for want of money, with ample means otherwise; which is a proof, that our current cash is not a competent representative of the labor and commodities of the country. Another proof of the same nature is, that particular States who have found no small difficulty in collecting their pecuniary taxes, have been successful in raising contributions to a large amount in kind.

This country never having been a country of manufactures, the productions of the soil ever were, as they still are, the principal source of revenue. The inhabitants have abridged their wants of foreign articles, from the scarcity of them, and have, in part, supplied their place by home manufactures; which, being chiefly conducted by the women, take nothing from the labor appropriated to agriculture, while it enables the farmer to spare a larger portion of his income to the public.

Whatever diminution our means of revenue may have suffered, must be accounted for on the decay of foreign trade, and on the loss of territory. The imposts on trade in Great Britain amounted to about a fourth of its total revenue. The proportion must be less in America. But suppose it to be the same; suppose our external commerce to be reduced one-half, which I believe is an ample allowance, then, one-eighth should be deducted from our revenue on this account; which would bring it down to six millions, five hundred and sixty-two thousand, five hundred dollars. Allow for the loss of Georgia and South Carolina one-eighth of this sum: this would reduce the income of the remaining States to five millions, seven hundred and forty-two thousand, one hundred and eighty-eight, and four-eighths, dollars. But as the allowance, in both cases, is large, the diminution I have already supposed, of one-fifth of the whole, appears to be nearest the truth; which leaves these States with a net revenue of six millions of dollars.

We will now examine how far this rule agrees with experience, and with what has already been effected in these States. Massachusetts may serve as a criterion. This is one of the States where taxation has been carried furthest. Taxes were so heavy last year, that I am informed there were real marks of distress among some classes of the people. The Legislature, in their late Address, tell us that they amounted to six hundred thousand pounds lawful: and they appear to have thought the pressure of them too great, by reducing them at a time when they are obliged to have recourse to a large loan, to answer the exigencies of the current year.

The taxes they specify which seem to belong to those of the

present year, with the addition of the bounties for raising men, and the beef supply, may be estimated at near five hundred thousand pounds.

This State is in a different situation from any other. Its position has made it impossible for the enemy to intercept its trade; while that of all the others has been greatly injured or totally obstructed. It has become, in consequence, the mart of the States northward of Pennsylvania; and its commerce has enlarged itself much beyond its former limits. A great part of the money expended for the support of the war, has been disbursed there. Congress, in their requisitions for money, have rated the quota of Massachusetts at of the whole; but I believe its ability, at this time, is in the proportion of one-fifth. I found this estimation on an impartial comparison of the circumstances of the several States.

Admitting the proportion to be just, and taking the taxes of the present year as a standard, the gross amount of our collective revenues would be two millions, five hundred thousand pounds lawful; or eight millions, three hundred and thirty-three thousand, three hundred and thirty-three, and one-third, dollars. The expense of collection, in England, is about the ninth of the gross amount; and considering that our revenue is to be raised in eleven different governments, each having a complete set of collectors of its own, the expense of collection, with us, will in all probability be not much less than it is in England. Supposing it to be the same, and that the taxes were to prove as productive as their nominal amount, our net revenue would then be seven millions, four hundred and seven thousand, four hundred and eight, and one-half, dollars; which considerably exceeds what it ought to be by my first calculation.

But there are considerations which may induce us to make large deductions from this sum. When the Legislature tells us, that the taxes of last year amounted to six hundred thousand pounds, it also tells us that there was *a part* of them still to be levied; which, among other things, had occasioned them to postpone the next tax to a future session. Whatever is due on the last year, may be considered, in effect, as an anticipation on

the taxes of the present; for it takes off so much from the ability of the people to pay them. The chances are, that the additional impositions projected for the current year will not be raised in their full extent. Taxes are seldom or never so productive as their estimated value; and in a case like this, must be expected to be more than commonly deficient.

It is to be observed, also, that the last year was a year of peculiar exertion. There was a general expectation of some attempt, in conjunction with our allies, decisive of the war. This made the people strain their efforts beyond their natural abilities: and yet they did not comply with the demands of the Legislature.

The money for the bounties this year, which I have calculated at sixty thousand pounds,* may, in like manner, be regarded as an extraordinary and special contribution, which the people may be willing to submit to, over and above what they could probably afford to pay, to get rid of the insupportable inconvenience of temporary enlistments.

Reasonable deductions on these accounts being made, will bring the two calculations to a pretty exact agreement, and make them confirm each other. But were not this the case, I should be inclined, in preference, to trust the first, as being founded on a basis better known and better ascertained by experience. I believe, however, we may safely conclude, from both, that between six and seven millions of dollars is the proper revenue of these States, after the dismemberment of South Carolina and Georgia.

Having formed an estimate of our ability for revenue, the next thing to be ascertained is, the annual expense of our civil and military establishments. With tolerable economy, I should suppose two millions and a half of dollars would amply suffice for the first, including the particular administration of each State. For the second, judiciously managed, eight millions of dollars would be adequate, calculating for an army of twenty thousand

* It is to be feared, too, that this sum is rated too high. Hitherto we have not four hundred men from that State, nor very promising accounts of those which may be expected.

men, which are as many as we shall stand in need of, or be able* to raise. Eleven millions of dollars will be then the amount of the annnal expenses of these States. I speak on a supposition that a system were embraced, well adapted to rescuing our affairs from the chaos in which they are now involved; and which, while it continues, must baffle all calculation.

The difference between our revenues and expenses, on the preceding scale, will be from four to four and a half millions of dollars; which deficiency must of course be supplied by credit, foreign or domestic, or both.

With regard to credit abroad, I think we have little chance of obtaining a sufficiency, nearly to answer our purpose. France, by all the reforms she can make in her interior economy, by all the means she can procure in loans and lotteries, in addition to her revenue, can do little more than satisfy her own wants. The death of the Empress Queen, and the notorious hostility of the

* The proportion of the European armies, in general, to the national population, is calculated at one to a hundred. By this rule, supposing our population to be two and a half millions, our armies ought to consist of twenty-five thousand men; but the proportion will naturally be less in this country. Our population is more diffused: there is a greater facility of procuring subsistence, fewer poor (and consequently fewer of that class of men whose habits, tempers, and circumstances lead them to embrace the military life) than in any other country in the world. Hence it is, I say, twenty thousand men are as many as we shall be able to raise. Experience justifies this opinion. In the first paroxysms of enthusiasm our armies were larger. I believe, at particular periods, we have had more than thirty thousand men in the field: but our force has every year diminished, and has been for two years past below the standard I have assigned. Immense efforts have been made to procure men, but they have not been able to produce more. This shows that our military system is still susceptible of great reforms in favor of economy; but we dare not make them, because we cannot pay the army. I also said, twenty thousand men would be as many as we should stand in need of. The enemy have now less than this number within the States; and cannot, in the future progress of the war, have more.

An equal force, with the occasional aid of the militia, will confine them within one or two capital points; and this will be their defeat. But we have a further resource in the troops of our allies. We must not dream of decisive enterprises, unless our allies will assist us with twelve or fifteen thousand land troops, and an undisputed maritime superiority. Then, with the aid of the militia, drawn out for a few months, we may undertake and succeed. Our true policy, in the meantime, is, to endeavor to form a solid compact force, proportioned to our necessities.

Emperor, will add to the number of these. She will, in all probability, be obliged to pay greater attention to her army, which has been neglected, for several years past, to apply all the resources of the kingdom to the improvement of the navy. Though Russia and Prussia, by the last advices, seemed disposed to control the ill-humor of the Emperor, France will hardly think it prudent to leave herself in a defenceless condition, relying on the precarious friendship and momentary interests of other powers. The increase of her army will necessarily increase her expenses, as she cannot, in the present state of things, retrench any thing from the navy; and of course she will have less money to spare to allies. It has been observed, that France has hitherto imposed none of the additional taxes usual in time of war; by doing which, it is imagined she would have it in her power, not only to supply her own wants better, but to contribute largely to ours. To this it has been answered, with great appearance of reason, that the credit of the financier very much depends on his having such a resource in reserve, which, being considered as a mean he may command, when necessary, to fulfil his engagements, disposes moneyed men to lend to him with the greater freedom and confidence. The breaking in upon that resource, therefore (it is said), would injure credit, and obstruct loans in a degree that could not be compensated by the direct value of the revenue it would furnish.

Upon the whole, however, from a variety of siftings and inquiries, I should be mistaken if France did not lend this country eight or ten millions of livres annually, during the war; provided its finances were once put upon a reasonable footing: but this is not above a third of our wants.

I find no reason to flatter ourselves that we have much to expect either from the ability or inclination of Spain. Her government is far from being so rich as is vulgarly imagined. The mines of South America, of late years, have been less liberal of their profits; and, for fear of accidents, but a small part of their product, since the war, has been imported into Europe. The extreme indolence of the Spaniards, and their neglect of agriculture, manufactures, and trade, make them tributary to

their more industrious neighbors, who drain them of their precious metals as fast as they arrive.

But if they were heartily disposed to do it, they might still afford us some assistance. Their conduct, hitherto, has manifested no such disposition: it has been as cold and reserved as it could well be. The bills drawn upon them have not been rejected, but they have not been paid. Their permitting the residence of a British emissary among them, and the countenance they give him, unprecedented in a state of war, afford just room for a distrust of their intentions, though it may be nothing more than a stroke of policy, to play him off against our negotiations, and make us bid higher for their friendship. Their method of prosecuting the war is passive, to a degree that can scarcely be resolved even into Spanish supineness; but seems to have a more corrupt original. A bigoted prince, governed by a greedy confessor, is a character on which little dependence can be placed.

'Tis not on Spain, then, that we are to build our hopes of any considerable succors in money.

The Dutch government has of long standing mortgaged all its revenues. Taxation has been carried to a length that admits of little extension. 'Tis from its credit with its own citizens, that it must derive the means of making war. It has every thing to do. Its fleet is to be in a manner created anew; and its land forces to be recruited, having been, for some time past, suffered to decline very much. It will, therefore, stand in need of all its credit for its own uses. Of course we have nothing to expect from the government of that country.

The individuals will not have confidence enough in our public councils, to embark any considerable part of their fortunes with us, on the ordinary principles of a loan. Stronger inducements, the prospect of commercial advantages, securities different from the mere faith of the United States, must be held out, to tempt them to engage far with us. The plan I am going to propose, endeavors to conciliate these objects.

As to internal loans, on which, after all, we must chiefly depend, there are two things that operate against them, to any large amount; the want of a sufficient number of men, with suf-

ficient moneyed capitals to lend the sums required, and the want of confidence in those who are able to lend, to make them willing to part with their money. It may be added, that they can employ it to greater advantage in traffic, than by merely lending it on interest.

To surmount these obstacles, and give individuals ability and inclination to lend, in any proportion to the wants of government, a plan must be devised, which, by incorporating their means together, and uniting them with those of the public, will, on the foundation of that incorporation and union, erect a mass of credit that will supply the defect of moneyed capital, and answer all the purposes of cash; a plan which will offer adventurers immediate advantages, analogous to those they receive by employing their money in trade, and, eventually, greater advantages; a plan which will give them the greatest security the nature of the case will admit for what they lend; and which will not only advance their own interest, and secure the independence of their country, but, in its progress, have the most beneficial influence upon its future commerce, and be a source of national strength and wealth.

I mean the institution of a NATIONAL BANK. This I regard, in some shape or other, as an expedient essential to our safety and success; unless, by a happy turn of European affairs, the war should speedily terminate in a manner upon which it would be unwise to reckon. There is no other that can give to government that extensive and systematic credit, which the defect of our revenues makes indispensably necessary to its operations.

The longer it is delayed, the more difficult it becomes. Our affairs grow every day more relaxed and more involved; public credit hastens to a more irretrievable catastrophe; the means for executing the plan are exhausted in partial and temporary efforts. The loan now making in Massachusetts would have gone a great way in establishing the funds on which the Bank must stand.

I am aware of all the objections that have been made to public Banks; and that they are not without enlightened and respectable opponents. But all that has been said against them, only tends to prove that, like all other good things, they are subject

to abuse, and, when abused, become pernicious. The precious metals, by similar arguments, may be proven to be injurious. It is certain that the mines of South America have had great influence in banishing industry from Spain, and sinking it in real wealth and importance. Great power, commerce, and riches, or, in other words, great national prosperity, may, in like manner, be denominated evils; for they lead to insolence, an inordinate ambition, a vicious luxury, licentiousness of morals, and all those vices which corrupt government, enslave the people, and precipitate the ruin of a nation. But no wise statesman will reject the good, from an apprehension of the ill. The truth is, in human affairs there is no good, pure and unmixed: every advantage has two sides: and wisdom consists in availing ourselves of the good, and guarding as much as possible against the bad.

The tendency of a National Bank is to increase public and private credit. The former gives power to the State, for the protection of its rights and interests: and the latter facilitates and extends the operations of commerce among individuals. Industry is increased, commodities are multiplied, agriculture and manufactures flourish: and herein consists the true wealth and prosperity of a State.

Most commercial nations have found it necessary to institute Banks: and they have proved to be the happiest engines that ever were invented for advancing trade. Venice, Genoa, Hamburgh, Holland, and England, are examples of their utility. They owe their riches, commerce, and the figure they have made at different periods, in a great degree to this source. Great Britain is indebted for the immense efforts she has been able to make, in so many illustrious and successful wars, essentially to that vast fabric of credit raised on this foundation. 'Tis by this alone she now menaces our independence.

She has, indeed, abused the advantage, and now stands on a precipice. Her example should both persuade and warn us. 'Tis in republics where Banks are most easily established and supported, and where they are least liable to abuse. Our situation will not expose us to frequent wars; and the public will have no temptation to overstrain its credit.

In my opinion, we ought not to hesitate, because we have no other resource. The long and expensive wars of King William, had drained England of its specie: its commerce began to droop for want of a proper medium: its taxes were unproductive, and its revenues declined. The administration wisely had recourse to the institution of a Bank; and it relieved the national difficulties. We are in the same, and still greater, want of a sufficient medium. We have little specie: the paper we have is of small value, and rapidly descending to less: we are immersed in a war for our existence as a nation, for our liberty and happiness as a people: we have no revenues nor no credit. A Bank, if practicable, is the only thing that can give us either the one or the other.

Besides these great and cardinal motives to such an institution, and the advantages we should enjoy from it, in common with other nations, our situation, relatively to Europe and to the West Indies, would give us some peculiar advantages.

Nothing is more common than for men to pass from the abuse of a good thing, to the disuse of it. Some persons, disgusted by the depreciation of the money, are chimerical enough to imagine it would be beneficial to abolish all paper credit, annihilate the whole of what is now in circulation, and depend altogether upon our specie, both for commerce and finance. The scheme is altogether visionary, and in the attempt would be fatal. We have not a competent stock of specie in this country, either to answer the purposes of circulation in trade, or to serve as a basis for revenue. The whole amount of what we have, I am persuaded, does not exceed six millions of dollars, one-fifth of the circulating medium before the war. To suppose this would be sufficient for the operations of commerce, would be to suppose that our domestic and foreign commerce were both reduced four-fifths: a supposition that carries absurdity in the face of it. It follows that if our paper money were destroyed, a great part of the transactions of traffic must be carried on by barter; a mode inconvenient, partial, confined, destructive both of commerce and industry. With the addition of the paper we now have, this evil exists in too great a degree.

With respect to revenue, could the whole of our specie be drawn into the public treasury annually, we have seen that it would be little more than one half of our annual expense. But this would be impracticable; it has never been effected in any country. Where the numerary of a country is a sufficient representative, there is only a certain proportion of it that can be drawn out of daily circulation; because, without the necessary quantity of cash, a stagnation of business would ensue. How small, then, would be the proportion of the six millions (in itself so unequal a representative) which the public would be able to extract in revenue. It must either have little or no revenue, or it must receive its dues in kind; on the inefficacy and inconveniences of which mode, I have already remarked. The necessity for it, in part, unhappily now has place, for the cause assigned, a deficiency of current cash: but were we to establish it as our principal dependence, it would be impossible to contrive a mode less productive to the public, more contrary to the habits and inclinations of the people, or more baneful to industry.

But waiving the objections on this head, there would still remain a balance of four millions of dollars more than these States can furnish in revenue, which must be provided for the yearly expense of the war. How is this to be procured without a paper credit, to supply the deficiency of specie, and enable the moneyed men to lend? This question, I apprehend, will be of no easy solution.

In the present system of things, the health of a State, particularly a commercial one, depends on a due quantity and regular circulation of cash, as much as the health of an animal body depends upon the due quantity and regular circulation of the blood. There are indisputable indications that we have not a sufficient medium; and what we have is in continual fluctuation. The only cure to our public disorders, is to fix the value of the currency we now have, and increase it to a proper standard, in a species that will have the requisite stability.

The error of those who would explode paper money altogether, originates in not making proper distinctions. Our paper was, in its nature, liable to depreciation, because it had no funds

for its support, and was not upheld by private credit. The emissions under the resolution of March, '80, have partly the former advantage, but are destitute of the latter, which is equally essential. No paper credit can be substantial, or durable, which has not funds, and which does not unite, immediately, the interest and influence of the moneyed men, in its establishment and preservation. A credit begun on this basis, will, in process of time, greatly exceed its funds: but this requires time, and a well settled opinion in its favor. 'Tis in a National Bank, alone, that we can find the ingredients to constitute a wholesome, solid, and beneficial paper credit.

I am aware that, in the present temper of men's minds, it will be no easy task to inspire a relish for a project of this kind: but much will depend on the address and personal credit of the proposer. In your hands I should not despair: and I should have the greater hopes for what I am informed appeared to be the disposition, at the promulgation of the plan for a loan in Massachusetts. The men of property in America, are enlightened about their own interest, and would easily be brought to see the advantages of a good plan. They ought not to be discouraged at what has happened heretofore, when they behold the administration of our finances put into a better channel. The violations of public engagements, hitherto, have proceeded more from a necessity produced by ignorance and mismanagement, than from levity or a disregard to the obligations of good faith.

Should the success, in the first instance, not be as complete as the extent of the plan requires, this should not hinder its being undertaken. It is of the nature of a Bank, wisely instituted, and wisely administered, to extend itself, and, from small beginnings, grow to a magnitude that could not have been foreseen.

The plan I propose, requires a stock of three millions of pounds, lawful money; but if one-half the sum could be obtained, I should entertain no doubt of its full success. It now remains to submit my plan, which I rather offer as an outline, than as a finished plan. It contains, however, the general principles. To each article, in an opposite column, I shall affix an explanatory remark.

ART. 1. A Bank to be erected with a stock of three millions of pounds, lawful money, at the rate of six shillings to a dollar, divided into thirty thousand shares. This stock to be exempted from all public taxes and impositions whatsoever.

REMARK 1. By the second Article, a part of the stock is to be in landed security: by this, the whole is to be exempted from taxes. Here will be a considerable saving to the proprietor, which is to be estimated among the clear profits of the Bank. This will indeed be a small reduction of the public revenue; but the loss will be of little consequence, compared with the advantages to be derived from the Bank.

ART. II. A subscription to be opened for the amount of the stock. A subscriber of from one share to five, to advance the whole in specie. A subscriber of six shares to fifteen, to advance one-half in specie, the other half in good landed security. A subscriber of sixteen shares, and upwards, to advance two-sixths in specie, one-sixth in bills or securities on good European funds, and three-sixths in good landed security. In either case of specie, plate or bullion, at a given value, proportioned to its quality, may be substituted; and in either case of landed security, specie, good bills, or securities on European funds, to be admissible in their stead.*

REMARK 2. By admitting landed security as a part of the Bank stock, while we establish solid funds for the money emitted, we at the same time supply the defect of specie, and we give a strong inducement to moneyed men to advance their money; because, not only the money actually deposited is to be employed for their benefit, but, on the credit of their landed security, by the seventh Article, may be raised an equal amount in cash, to be also employed for their benefit: by which artifice they have the use of their land (exempted, too, from taxes), and the use of the value of it in a representative cash. In this consists a capital advantage of the Bank to the proprietors. A, for instance, advances six hundred pounds in specie, and as much more in landed security. By the establishment he may draw bank notes for the whole

* The possibility of making up so large a proportion of specie will depend on foreign assistance. It could hardly be hoped to effect it within ourselves, if, as I suppose, there are not more than six millions of dollars in these States. It is true, plate is admitted; but it is uncertain how far this may prove a resource. It were to be wished the proportion of specie might be as large as possible: but, perhaps, for fear of a failure, it may be advisable to alter the above proportions, so as to have, upon the whole, about one-third in specie, and two-thirds in European funds and landed security.

of his stock, that is, for twelve hundred pounds, when he only advances half the sum in money. These bank notes operating as cash, his land (continuing, as we observed above, in his own use, with the privilege besides of an exemption from taxes) is converted into cash; which he may employ in loans, in profitable contracts, in beneficial purchases, in discounting bills of exchange, and in the other methods permitted in the subsequent Articles. Besides all this, when the bank notes have once acquired a fixed credit, he is not obliged to keep his six hundred pounds, deposited in specie, idle: he may lend, or otherwise improve, a part of that also. These advantages will not exist in their full extent at first, but they will soon succeed each other.

ART. III. The Bank to be erected into a legal corporation; to have all the powers and immunities requisite to its security, to the recovery of its debts, and to the disposal of its property.

REMARK 3. This Article needs no illustration.

ART. IV. The stock of the Bank not to be liable to any attachment or seizure whatsoever; but, on refusal of payment, the holders of bank notes, or bonds, may enter suit against any member, or members, of the corporation; and, as far as their respective shares in the Bank extend, recover the debt, with cost and damages, out of their private property.

REMARK 4. The first part of this regulation is necessary to engage foreigners to trust their property in the Bank; the latter part to give an idea of security to the holders of bank notes.

ART. V. The United States, or any particular States, or foreigners, may become subscribers to the Bank, and participate its profits, for any sums not exceeding the whole half the stock.

REMARK 5. This will link the interests of the public more intimately with the Bank, and be an easy method of acquiring revenue. It will also facilitate the making up its stock by the loans which

Congress may obtain abroad; without which it would be more difficult to raise so large a sum. It is essential the stock should be large, because, in proportion to it, will be the credit of the Bank, and of course its ability to lend and enlarge its paper emissions. The admission of foreigners will also assist the completing the stock; and it is probable many may be induced to enter into the plan, especially after it has made some progress among ourselves, and obtained a degree of consistency.

The sum is limited to one half the stock, because it is of primary importance the moneyed men among ourselves should be deeply interested in the plan.

ART. VI. The United States, collectively and particularly, to become responsible for all the transactions of the Bank, conjointly with the private proprietors.

REMARK 6. This mode of pledging the public faith, makes it as difficult to be infringed as could possibly be devised. In our situation it is expedient to offer every appearance of security. Foreigners are more firmly persuaded of the establishment of our independence than of the continuance of our union; and will therefore have more confidence in the States bound separately than collectively. Individuals among ourselves will be influenced by similar considerations.

ART. VII. The Bank to issue notes payable at sight, in pounds, shillings, and pence, lawful: all of twenty shillings, and under, to bear no interest: all above, to bear an interest not exceeding four per cent. The notes to be of so many denominations as may be judged convenient for circulation, and of two kinds; one payable only in America, the other payable either in America or in any part of Europe

REMARK 7. The reason of having them payable at sight, is to inspire the greater confidence and give them a readier currency: nor do I apprehend there would be any danger from it. In the beginning some may be carried to the Bank for payment, but finding they are punctually discharged, the applications will cease. The notes are payable in pounds, shillings, and pence, rather than in

where the Bank may have funds. The aggregate of these notes never to exceed the Bank stock.

dollars, to produce an illusion in the minds of the people favorable to the new paper; or rather to prevent their transferring to that their prejudices against the old. Paper credit depends much on opinion, and opinion is often guided by outside appearances. A circumstance trivial as this may seem, might have no small influence on the popular imagination. And if 20*s.*, and under, are without interest, because such small sums will be diffused in the lesser transactions of daily circulation, there will be less probability of their being carried to the Bank for payment.

The interest on the larger notes is calculated to give them a preference to specie, and prevent a run upon the Bank. The notes, however, must be introduced by degrees, so as not to inundate the public at once. Those bearing no interest ought not to be multiplied too much at first; but as the interest is an abridgment of the profits of the Bank, after the notes have gained an unequivocal credit, it will be advantageous to issue a large proportion of the smaller ones. At first, the interest had best be at four per cent., to operate the more effectually as a motive: afterwards, on the new notes, it may be gradually diminished: but it will always be expedient to let them bear an interest not less than two per cent.

The making some of the notes payable in Europe as well as in America, is necessary to enable the Bank to avail itself of its funds there: it will also serve to raise the demand for Bank notes, by rendering them useful in foreign commerce, the promoting which is a further inducement.

The limiting the aggregate of the notes to the amount of the stock, is necessary to obviate a suspicion of their being multiplied beyond the means of redemption.

ART. VIII. The Bank to lend money to the public, or to individuals, at an interest not exceeding eight per cent.

REMARK 8. In the beginning it will be for the advantage of the Bank to require high interest, because money is in great demand, and the Bank itself will want the principal part of its cash for the loans stipulated in Article XIII, and for peforming the contracts authorized by Article XII: so that the profits will not, for some time, turn materially on the principle of loans, except that to the public. But when the contracts cease, the Bank will find its advantage in lending, at a moderate interest, to secure a preference from borrowers, which will, at the same time, promote commerce; and by a kind of mutual reaction, the Bank will assist commerce, and commerce will assist the Bank.

ART. IX. The Bank to have liberty of borrowing, on the best terms it can, to the amount of one half of its stock.

REMARK 9. This is a precaution against a sudden run. It may borrow in proportion to what it pays. It has another advantage: at particular conjunctures the Bank may borrow at a low interest, and lend, at others, at a higher.

ART. X. The Bank to have liberty of purchasing estates by principal, or by annuities; the power of coining to the amount of half its stock, the quantity of alloy, etc., being determined by Congress; also the power of discounting bills of exchange.

REMARK 10. This privilege of purchasing estates will be a very valuable one. By watching favorable opportunities, with so large a capital, vast property may be acquired in this way. There will be a fine opening at the conclusion of the war. Many persons disaffected to our independence, who have rendered themselves odious without becoming obnoxious to the laws, will be disposed to sell their

estates here, either for their whole value, or for annuities in Europe. The power of coining* is necessary, as plate, or bullion, is admitted instead of specie; and it may be, on particular occasions, expedient to coin them; this will be a small resource to the Bank. The power of discounting bills of exchange will be a considerable one. Its advantages will consist in purchasing, or taking up for the honor of the drawer, when the security is good, bills of exchange at so much per cent. discount. A large profit might be now made in this way on the bills drawn on France; and hereafter, in times of peace, when commerce comes to flourish, this practice will promote the transactions of the several States with each other, and with Europe, and will be very profitable to the Bank.

ART. XI. The Bank to receive from individuals, deposits of any sums of money, to be repaid when called for, or passed, by order, to the credit of others; or deposits of plate, paying a certain annual rate for safe keeping. Whatever is deposited in the Bank, to be exempt from taxes.

REMARK 11. This is in imitation of the Bank of Amsterdam. If individuals once get into the practice of depositing their money in Bank, it will give credit to the Bank, and assist trade. In time, a premium may be required at repayment as in Holland. A small profit may be immediately gained on plate, as the States begin to tax this article; and many persons will dispense at this time with the use of their plate, if they can deposit it in a place of safety, and pay less for keeping it than the tax. Whatever serves to increase the apparent wealth of the Bank, will enhance its credit! It may even be useful to let the owners of the plate have credit in Bank for the value of the plate, estimated on

* It may, perhaps, not be impossible to make some profitable speculations on the bullion which the Spaniards are afraid to transport from South America to Europe.

a scale that would make it for the advantage of the Bank to purchase.

ART. XII. The Bank to have a right to contract with the French government for the supply of its fleets and armies in *America*, and to contract with Congress for the supply of their armies.

REMARK 12. It will be of great importance to the success of the subscriptions, that a previous assurance of these contracts should take place: the profits of them would be no trifling inducement to adventurers; it would have the air of employing the money subscribed in trade. As soon, therefore, as the plan should be resolved upon, negotiations should be begun for the purpose. It is so clearly the interest of the French government to enter into these contracts, that they must be blind not to do it, especially when it is proposed under the aspect of a method of re-establishing our finances. The present loss on their bills is enormous. The Bank may engage to receive them at a moderate discount, and to supply on better terms than they now make. Their business is at this time trusted to a variety of hands, some of which are neither very skilful nor very honest: competitions, frauds, and additional expense, are the consequences.

Congress could not hesitate on their parts, as the amount of the contracts would be a part of the loan required in Article XIII.

ART. XIII. The Bank to lend Congress one million, two hundred thousand pounds, lawful, at eight per cent. interest; for the payment of which, with its interest, a certain unalienable fund of one hundred and ten thousand, four hundred pounds per annum, to be established for twenty years. The States, generally and severally, to pledge themselves for this sum, and for the due appropriation of the fund.

REMARK 13. This loan will enable Congress to get through the expenses of the year. There may be a small deficiency, but this will be easily supplied. The credit of the Bank once established, it may increase its stock, and lend an equal sum every year during the war. This loan may be advanced, partly in a contract for provisions, clothing, etc., and partly in cash, at periodical payments, to avoid a

Congress to have a right, at any intermediate period, to pay off the debt, with the interest to the time of payment. The same rule to govern in all future loans.

ART. XIV. The Bank to become responsible for the redemption of all the paper now emitted; the old, at forty for one in thirty years, the new at par, with gold and silver, according to the terms promised by Congress in their resolution of March, '80. One-third of the first to be redeemed at the end of every ten years; and the whole of the last to be redeemed at the expiration of the six years specified by Congress, with the interest of five per cent. The United States, in compensation for this responsibility, to establish certain funds for an annuity, payable to the Bank, equal to the discharge of the whole amount of the paper currency in thirty years, with an interest of two per cent. per annum.

too quick multiplication of Bank notes.

REMARK 14. It is of the greatest importance that the old currency should be fixed at a certain value, or there will be danger of its infecting the future paper: besides, we want to raise it to a point that will make it approach nearer to an adequate medium. I have chosen the resolution of March, '80, as a standard. We ought not, on any account, to raise the value of the old paper higher than forty to one, for this will give it about the degree of value that is most salutary; at the same time that it will avoid a second breach of faith, which would cause a violent death to all future credit. A stable currency is an idea fundamental to all practicable schemes of finance. It is the duty and interest of the public to give stability to that which now exists; and it will be the interest of the Bank, which alone can effect it, to co-operate. I have not mentioned the amount of the annuity to be paid by Congress, because I have not materials to judge what quantity of paper money now exists; since it will be necessary to take all the State emissions into the calculation. I suppose (including State emissions) there may be about four hundred millions of dollars of the old standard, and about four millions of the new.* This will give us, in specie-value, about fourteen millions of dollars. This is what the Bank is to become

* It is impossible too soon to make some arrangement that will enable Congress to put a stop to the further emission.

answerable for, and what the public is to pay, by an annuity of thirty years, with two per cent. interest. This annuity would amount to six hundred and eleven thousand, three hundred and thirty-three, and one-third, dollars, for which funds are to be provided.

By a rough calculation, I find that the Bank would gain, in the thirty years, about three millions of dollars, on the simple footing of interest; and that it will, at different periods, have more public money in its possession, than it will be in advance at others: so that, upon the whole, the sum it will gain in interest, will be for the loan of its credit to the public, not of any specific sum of cash. Besides, the interest of the Bank may gain a very considerable sum by the purchases it may make of the old paper at its current value, before the influence of this plan has time to bring it back to the point at which it is intended to be fixed.* It is the obvious interest of the United States to concur in this plan, because, by paying three millions of dollars in interest to the Bank, more than it would have to pay to the money-holders, agreeably to its present engagements, it would avoid a new breach of faith, fix its circulating medium increased in value more than one-half, render the taxes more productive, and introduce order into its finances, without which our independence is lost. It will also have only about two-thirds of the funds to establish for this plan that are required by

* There is another immense consideration. The proprietors of the Bank will the holders of a great part of this paper. They have it in their power to ıble the value of it by this plan: which is, in other words, to gain a hundred · cent.

the Act of March, '80, to discharge the new bills: it will, of course, reserve a large balance towards the current expenses, which is no insignificant consideration.

Perhaps it may be imagined, that the same funds established for the redemption of the money in the same time, without passing through the Bank, would have an equal effect upon its credit, and then we should save the interest of two per cent. Experience proves the contrary. We find the new notes depreciating in the States which have provided good funds. The truth is, there is not confidence enough in any funds merely public. The responsibility of the Bank would beget a much stronger persuasion of the paper being redeemed, and have incomparably more efficacy in raising and confirming its credit. Besides, the Bank might immediately reduce the quantity by purchase, which the public could not do.

It will be observed, that of the six millions of dollars which constitute our annual revenue, I require nine hundred and seventy-nine thousand, three hundred and thirty-three, and one-third, dollars, in funds, to reimburse the loan for the first year, and pay off the annuity for the redemption of the old paper. It may be asked, where these funds are to be procured in the present impotence of our federal government. I answer, there are ample means for them, and they must be had. Congress must deal plainly with their constituents. They must tell them, that power without revenue is a bubble; that unless they give them substantial resources of the latter, they will not have enough of the former,

either to prosecute the war, or to maintain the Union in peace; that, in short, they must, in justice to the public and to their own honor, renounce the vain attempt of carrying on the war without either; a perseverance in which, can only deceive the people, and betray their safety. They must demand an instant, positive, and perpetual investiture of an impost on trade; a land tax, and a poll tax, to be collected by their own agents. This Act to become a part of the Confederation.

It has ever been my opinion that Congress ought to have complete sovereignty in all but the mere municipal law of each State; and I wish to see a convention of all the States, with full power to alter and amend, finally and irrevocably, the present futile and senseless Confederation.

The taxes specified, may be made to amount to three millions of dollars; the other three millions to be raised by requisition, as heretofore.

ART. XV. The Bank notes to received in payment of all pubcustoms and taxes, at an equilent with gold and silver.

REMARK 15. It is essential that all taxes should be raised, throughout the United States, in specie, or Bank notes at par, or the old paper at its current value at the time of payment. This will serve to increase the circulation and credit of the Bank notes; but no person should be obliged to receive them in private dealings. Their credit must depend on opinion; and this opinion would be injured by legislative interposition.

ART. XVI. The Bank to disve itself whenever it thinks pro-, making effectual provision for

REMARK 16. This permission to dissolve or sell at pleasure, will encourage men to adventure; and,

the payment of its debts; and a proprietor of Bank stock to have the privilege of selling out whenever he pleases.

when once engaged, the profits will make them willing to continue.

ART. XVII. The Bank to be established for thirty years by way of experiment.

REMARK 17. This is chiefly to prevent some speculative men being alarmed, who, upon the whole, may think a paper credit detrimental and dangerous, though they would be willing, from necessity, to encourage it for a limited time. Experience, too, may show the defects of this plan, and give rise to alterations for the better.

ART. XVIII. No other Bank, public or private, to be permitted during that period.

REMARK 18. Other Banks might excite a competition prejudicial to the interests of this, and multiply and diversify paper credit too much.

ART. XIX. Three Banks to be erected in Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, and Virginia, to facilitate the circulation and payment of the Bank notes.

REMARK 19. These Banks ought to be in the interior of the country, remote from danger, with every precaution for their security in every way. Their distance from the capital trading points, will be an advantage, as it will make applications for the payment of Bank notes less convenient.

ART. XX. The affairs of the Bank to be managed by twelve general Directors, men of reputation and fortune; eight of them to be chosen by the private proprietors, and four by Congress. The Minister of Finance to have the privilege of inspecting all their proceedings.

REMARK 20. It is necessary, for reciprocal security of the public, the proprietors, and the people, that the affairs of the Bank should be conducted under a joint direction.

These, as has been already observed, are only intended as outlines; the form of administration for the Bank, and all other matters, may be easily determined, if the leading principles are once approved. We shall find good models in the different

European Banks, which we can accommodate to our circumstances. Great care, in particular, should be employed to guard against counterfeits; and I think methods may be devised that would be effectual.

I see nothing to prevent the practicability of a plan of this kind, but a distrust of the final success of the war, which may make men afraid to risk any considerable part of their fortunes in the public funds; but, without being an enthusiast, I will venture to assert, that, with such a resource as is here proposed, the loss of our independence is impossible. All we have to fear is, that the want of money may disband the army, or so perplex and enfeeble our operations, as to create in the people a general disgust and alarm, which may make them clamor for peace on any terms. But if a judicious administration of our finances, assisted by a Bank, takes place, and the ancient security of property is restored, no convulsion is to be apprehended. Our opposition will soon assume an aspect of system and vigor, that will relieve and encourage the people, and put an end to the hopes of the enemy. 'Tis evident they have it not in their power to subdue us by force of arms. In all these States they have not more than fifteen thousand effective troops, nor is it possible for them much to augment this number. The East and West Indies demand reinforcements. In all the Islands, they have not, at this time, above five thousand men; a force not more than equal to the proper garrisoning of Jamaica alone; and which, the moment they lose a maritime superiority in those seas, will leave them much cause to fear for their possessions. They will probably send out fifteen hundred or two thousand men, to recruit their regiments already here; but this is the utmost they can do.

Our allies have five thousand men at Rhode Island, which, in the worst event that can happen, will be recruited to eight, to co-operate with us on a defensive plan. Should our army amount to no more than fifteen thousand men, the combined forces, though not equal to the expulsion of the enemy, will be equal to the purpose of compelling them to renounce their offensive, and content themselves with maintaining one or two capital points. This is on the supposition that the public have the means of

putting their troops in activity. By stopping the progress of their conquests, and reducing them to an unmeaning and disgraceful defensive, we destroy the national expectation of success, from which the ministry draw their resources. It is not a vague conjecture, but a fact founded on the best information, that, had it not been for the capture of Charleston, and the victory of Camden, the ministry would have been in the utmost embarrassment for the supplies of this year. On the credit of those events, they procured a loan of five and twenty millions. They are in a situation where a want of splendid successes is ruin. They have carried taxation nearly to its extreme boundary; they have mortgaged all their funds; they have a large unfunded debt, besides the enormous mass which is funded. This must necessarily create apprehensions in their most sanguine partisans: and if these are not counteracted by flattering events, from time to time, they cannot much longer continue the delusion. Indeed, in this case, I suppose they must themselves despair.

The game we play is a sure game, if we play it with skill. I have calculated, in the preceding observations, on the most disadvantageous side. Many events may turn up, in the course of the summer, to make even the present campaign decisive.

If we compare the real ability of France, for revenue, with that of Great Britain; the economy and sagacity in the conduct of the finances of the former; the extravagance and dissipation which are overwhelming those of the latter; there will be found every reason to believe, that the resources of France will outlast those of her adversary. Her fleet is not much inferior, independent of that of Spain and Holland. Combined with that of Spain, it is greatly superior. If the Dutch enter into the war in earnest, and add their fleet, the superiority will be irresistible. Notwithstanding the injury they may sustain in the first instance, the Dutch will be still formidable: they are rich in credit, and have extensive means for maritime power.

Except the Emperor, who is hostile, and the Dane, who is neutral, all the rest of Europe are either friends to France or to our independence.

Never did a nation unite more circumstances in its favor than we do: we have nothing against us but our own misconduct.

There are two classes of men among us, equally mistaken: one who, in spite of daily experience, of accumulated distress, persist in a narrow line of policy, and, amidst the most threatening dangers, fancy every thing in perfect security. Another, who, judging too much from the outside, alarmed by partial misfortunes, and the disordered state of our finances, without estimating the real faculties of the parties, give themselves up to an ignorant and ill-founded despondency. We want to learn to appreciate our true situation and that of the enemy. This would preserve us from a stupid insensibility to danger on the one hand, and inspire us with a reasonable and enlightened confidence on the other.

But let us suppose the worst, that we shall, after all, fail in our independence; our return to Great Britain, whenever it should happen, would be by compact. The war would terminate by a mediation. It cannot be supposed that the mediator would be so devoted to Great Britain, or would have so little consideration for France, as to oblige us to revert to our former subjection by an unconditional surrender. While they might confirm his dominion over us, they would endeavor to save appearances for the honor of France, and stipulate terms as favorable to us as would be compatible with a state of dependence. A general amnesty, and the security of private property (of course the payment of public debts), would be among the most simple and most indispensable. This would comprehend the concerns of the Bank; and if, unfortunately for our virtue, such a circumstance could operate as an inducement, it might be added, that our enemies would be glad to find, and to encourage such an institution among us for their own benefit.

A question may arise concerning the abilities of these States to pay their debts after the establishment of their independence; and though any doubt on this head must originate in gross ignorance, it may be necessary to oppose it with more than general argument, as has been done heretofore. A very sum-

mary and obvious calculation will show that there is nothing to be dreaded on this head.

The funds of nine hundred and seventy-nine thousand, three hundred and thirty-three, and one-third, dollars, proposed to be established for paying off the loan of the first year, and for redeeming the present paper, will, in thirty years, wipe off all the debts of the States, except those contracted to foreigners, which, I imagine, do not amount to four millions of dollars. Suppose we should be obliged, for two years besides the present, to borrow an equal sum each year from the Bank; the fund requisite to discharge these loans, on the same terms with the first, will amount to seven hundred and thirty-six thousand dollars, to be deducted from the five million, and twenty thousand, six hundred and sixty-six, and two-thirds, dollars, remaining on the annual revenue; which will reduce it to four millions, two hundred and eighty-four thousand, six hundred and sixty-six, and two-thirds, dollars: then the debt unfunded will be,

To foreigners already contracted by supposition, ...	$4,000,000
Deficiency of Revenue to the expense to be obtained on credit, the first year, besides the loan from the Bank, ...	1,479,333⅓
Deficiency of Revenue for the second year deducting the fund for discharging the loan of this year, ...	1,847,333⅓
Deficiency of Revenue for the third year, making the same deduction,	2,215,333⅓
	$9,542,000

Should, then, the war last three years longer, which must probably be the utmost term of its duration, we shall find ourselves with an unfunded debt of nine million, five hundred and forty-two thousand dollars, and an unappropriated revenue of four million, two hundred and eighty-four thousand, six hundred and sixty-six, and two-thirds, dollars.

The surplus of four millions, which is two hundred and eighty-four thousand, six hundred and sixty-six, and two-thirds, dollars, and the funds appropriated to the payment of the other debts which will revert to the public at the end of thirty years, will be a sufficient fund for the redemption of this debt in about

ve years: so that, according to my plan, at the end of ve years these States have paid off the whole debt con- on account of the war; and, in the mean time, will have revenue of four millions of dollars, for defraying the ex- of their civil and military establishments.

s calculation supposes the ability of these States for reve- continue the same as they now are, which is a supposi- th false and unfavorable. Speaking within moderate , our population will be doubled in thirty years; there a confluence of emigrants from all parts of the world; merce will have a proportionable progress; and of course alth and capacity for revenue. It will be a matter of if we are not out of debt in twenty years, without at all ering the people.

national debt, if it is not excessive, will be to us a national g. It will be a powerful cement of our Union. It will ate a necessity for keeping up taxation to a degree which, t being oppressive, will be a spur to industry, remote as from Europe, and shall be from danger. It were other- be feared our popular maxims would incline us to too arsimony and indulgence. We labor less now than any d nation of Europe; and a habit of labor in the people, sential to the health and vigor of their minds and bodies, s conducive to the welfare of the State. We ought not r our self-love to deceive us in a comparison upon these

ave spun out this letter to a much greater length than I ed. To develope the whole connection of my ideas on ject, and place my plan in the clearest light, I have in- myself in many observations which might have been d. I shall not longer intrude upon your patience than to you of the sincere sentiments of esteem with which I have nor to be,

Sir, your most obedient and humble servant,

A. HAMILTON.

HAMILTON TO WASHINGTON.

DE PEYSTER'S POINT, May 2, 1781.

SIR:

I am extremely sorry to have embarrassed you by my late application, and that you should think there are insuperable obstacles to a compliance with it. Having renounced my expectations, I have no other inducement for troubling your Excellency with a second letter, than to obviate the appearance of having desired a thing inconsistent with the good of the service, while I was acquainted with the circumstances that made it so.

I was too interested a spectator of what happened in the case of Major M'Pherson, not to have remarked, and not to recollect all the circumstances. The opposition turned ostensibly on his being a brevet officer, yet having a command in a corps formed entirely from one line: the propriety of his being employed in a detachment from the army at large, so far as I remember, was not disputed. In delicacy to Major M'Pherson, no personal objections were formally made: but in reality they existed, and contributed to the discontent. It was thought a peculiar hardship, that a gentleman who had, for a long time, fought against us, and had not taken part with us till a late period, and when our affairs had assumed a more prosperous aspect, should be preferred in one of the most honorary commands of the service. Your Excellency must be convinced, that I mention this in no other view than to show the sentiments of the officers at the time, and the whole grounds for the opposition. My esteem for Major M'Pherson, and other reasons, make it impossible I can have a different intention.

I know less of the motives of dissatisfaction in the case of Colonel Gimat and Major Galvan; but I have understood that it is founded on their being appointed in the light corps for two successive campaigns.

It would be uncandid in me, not to acknowledge that I believe a disposition to exclude brevet officers in general from command, has a great share in the opposition in every instance; and that so far it affects my case. But, at the same time, it appears to me, this principle alone can never be productive of more than

momentary murmurs, where it is not seconded by some plausible pretext. I also am convinced that the Pennsylvania officers, for their own sakes, repented the rash steps they had taken; and, in cool reflection, were happy in an opportunity to relinquish their menaces of quitting a service to which they were attached by habit, inclination, and interest, as well as by patriotism. I believe, too, we shall never have a similar instance in the army, unless the practice should be carried to excess. Major Galvan, I am told, will probably be relieved. Colonel Gimat will be then the only brevet officer remaining in command. Your Excellency is the best judge of the proper limits; and there can be no doubt, that the rights of particular officers ought to give place to the general good and tranquillity of the service.

I cannot forbear repeating, that my case is peculiar, and dissimilar to all the former. It is distinguished by the circumstances I have before intimated; my early entrance into the service; my having made the campaign of '76, the most disagreeable of the war, at the head of a company of artillery, and having been entitled, in that corps, to a rank, equal in degree, more ancient in date, than I now possess; my having made all the subsequent campaigns in the family of the Commander-in-Chief, in a constant course of important and laborious service. These are my pretensions, at this advanced period of the war, to being employed in the only way which my situation admits; and I imagine they would have their weight in the minds of the officers in general. I only urge them a second time, as reasons which will not suffer me to view the matter in the same light with your Excellency, or to regard, as impracticable, my appointment in a light corps, should there be one formed. I entreat they may be understood in this sense only. I am incapable of wishing to obtain any object by importunity. I assure your Excellency, that I am too well persuaded of your candor, to attribute your refusal to any other cause than an apprehension of inconveniences that may attend the appointment.

I have the honor to be, with perfect respect,

Sir, your most obed't servant,

A. HAMILTON.

General Washington.

P. S. I have used the term brevet in the sense your Excellency appears to have understood it in, as signifying, in general, all officers not attached to any established corps. Congress seem, however, to have made a distinction: they only give a kind of warrant to those whom they designate as brevet officers. Mine is a regular commission.

LE VICOMTE DE NOAILLES A HAMILTON.

NEWPORT, 10 May, 1781.

Je suis certain, mon cher Colonel, de vous faire plaisir en vous aprenant que votre ami Laurens est arrivé à Paris en bonne santé, après une traversée favorable. Au départ de la frigate La Concorde arrivée à Boston avec M. de Barras amirat, qui vient prendre le commandement de notre flotte, et M. le Vicomte de Rochambau, Mr. Laurens avait déjà eu plusieurs conférences avec nos ministres; il aura été bien écouté et bien entendu de celui qui est chargé du departement de la marine, ainsi que de notre controleur général. Ces deux hommes paraissent influés infiniment dans ce moment sur l'opinion du Roi de France et celle du peuple; qui finit en France, comme dans tous les pays du monde par etre entendue. Vous saurez certainement quels sont les préparatifs pour cette campagne; je désire que nous puissions délivrer l'Amérique des souffrances qu'elle éprouve: quoique je ne sois point né dans un pays libre mon cher Colonel, je verrai avec plaisir les fondemens que vous allez établir pour le bonheur et la tranquillité d'un peuple chez lequel toutes les nations de l'Europe auront les mêmes droits. Une fois cette époque arrivée, l'Humanité jettera avec plaisir ses yeux sur l'autre monde, et verra sans envi un peuple qui ne devra son bonheur qu'à son propre courage. S'il m'est possible de placer une petite pierre dans ce vaste edifice, je me trouverai parfaitement heureux.

Le Ministre chargé de gouverner les finances de notre puis-

sance vient d'obtenir du roi de France la permission de lui rendre un compte public de son administration depuis cinq-ans qu'il en a la direction: cet exemple, le premier de ce genre 'a frappé l'Europe d'étonnement et d'amiration pour la conduite de ce grand homme; il prouve qu'au commencement de son ministère les dépenses de l'État excédait les recettes de 24 millions. Les différentes économies qu'il a pu établir, malgré la guerre et les frais énormes qu'elle exige, a rétabli non seulement l'équilibre mais même un bénéfice de dix millions de rente excédante et dix sept millions cinq-cent mille livres, employé annuellement à des remboursements de rentes perpetuelles. Ce qui produit maintenant 27 millions de rente de plus que de dépense. La manière énergique, raissonnée et claire rend son ouvrage persuasif aux yeux même de ses ennemis. Je compte vous envoyer ce livre par la première occasion et par celle-ci même, si l'homme qui vous remettra ma lettre veut s'en charger.

Je vous demanderais pardon de mon importunité, mon cher Colonel, si je n'avais pas été assez heureux pour vous donner de nouvelles de notre ami. Je vous prie de ne pas douter de l'extreme plaisir que j'aurai dans tous les tems de ma vie à vous prouver combien mon attachement pour vous est tendre et sincère.

LE VICOMTE DE NOAILLES.

Je vous prie de présenter mon respectueux hommage à Son Excellence le Général Washington; il force ses ennemis mêmes à l'estimer, et lorsqu'on l'a vu deux fois il laisse l'impression du respect le plus tendre.

Col. Hamilton.

CARTER TO HAMILTON.

NEWPORT, May 18, 1781.

MY DEAR SIR:

* * * * * * *

M. de Barras arrived a few days since, with the General's son, in a frigate from France. He has taken the command of

the fleet. Seven hundred land forces are now embarking, the wind is fair, and they sail this day to meet the convoy expected from France, with provisions and recruits for the regiments here. I fear they will have a very trifling augmentation of force, and that this campaign will prove as inactive as the last. I imagine you will be with General Washington at the conference. You will have the pleasure to see General Chastellux, who will give you this letter. At his return, I expect it will be decided whether the army marches or not: at present it seems a matter of great doubt, notwithstanding the preparations which are making. I am astonished we hear nothing from the southward. I fear, if the detachment, embarked at New-York, is destined for that quarter, that the enemy will make a considerable progress.

* * * * * * *

Your friend and servant,

JOHN CARTER.

Colonel Hamilton.

LA FAYETTE TO HAMILTON.

RICHMOND, May 23, 1781.

MY DEAR HAMILTON:

I have been long complaining that I had nothing to do; and want of employment was an objection I had to my going to the southward. But for the present, my dear friend, my complaint is quite of an opposite nature; and I have so many arrangements to make, so many difficulties to combat, so many enemies to deal with, that I am just that much of a general, as will make me a historian of misfortunes, and nail my name upon the ruins of what good folks are pleased to call the army in Virginia.

There is an age past since I heard from you. I acknowledge that, on my part, I have not written so often as I ought to have done; but you will excuse this silence in favor of my very embarrassing circumstances. However remote you may be from your former post of aid-de-camp to the Commander-in-Chief, I

am sure you are nevertheless acquainted with every transaction at head quarters. My letters have served to your information, and I shall consequently abstain from repetitions.

Our forced march saved Richmond; Phillips was going down; and thus far I was very happy. Phillips's return, his landing at Brandon, south side of James River, and the unmolested journey of Lord Cornwallis through North Carolina, made me apprehensive of the storm that was gathering. I advanced towards Petersburg, and intended to have established a communication upon James and Appamatox Rivers. Had Phillips marched to Halifax, I was determined to follow him; and should have risked every thing rather than to omit making a diversion in favor of Greene. But that army took possession of Petersburg, and obliged me to stick to this side of the river, from whence reinforcements are expected. Both armies have formed their junction, and must consist of between four and five thousand men. We have nine hundred continentals. Their infantry is near five to one; their cavalry ten to one. Our militia are not numerous, come without arms, and are not used to war. Government wants energy; and there is nothing to enforce the laws. General Greene has directed me to take command in this State; and I must tell, by the way, that his letter is very polite and affectionate. It then became my duty to arrange the departments, which I found in the greatest confusion and relaxation. Nothing can be obtained, and yet expenses were enormous.

The Baron, and the few new levies he could collect, are ordered to South Carolina. I am glad he goes, as the hatred of the Virginians to him was truly hurtful to the service. Is it not strange that General Wayne's detachment cannot be heard of? They are to go to Carolina; but should I want them for a few days, I am at liberty to keep them. This permission I will improve, so far as to receive one blow, that, being beat, I may at least be beat with some decency. There are accounts that make Lord Cornwallis very strong: others make him very weak. In this country there is no getting good intelligence.

I request you will write me, if you approve of my conduct.

The command of the waters, the superiority in cavalry, and the great disproportion of forces, gave the enemy such advantages, that I durst not venture out, and listen to my fondness for enterprise. To speak truth, I was afraid of myself as much as of the enemy. Independence has rendered me the more cautious, as I know my own warmth. But if the Pennsylvanians come, Lord Cornwallis shall pay something for his victory.

I wish a reinforcement of *light infantry*, to recruit the battalions, or a detachment under General Huntington was sent to me. I wish Laurens or Sheldon were immediately dispatched with their horse.

Come here, my dear friend, and command our artillery in Virginia. I want your advice and your exertions. If you grant my request, you will vastly oblige,

Your friend,

LA FAYETTE.

Colonel Hamilton.

MORRIS TO HAMILTON.

PHILADELPHIA, May 26, 1781.

SIR:

It is some time since I received your performance dated the 30th of April last. I have read it with that attention which it justly deserves, and finding many points of it to coincide with my own opinions on the subject, it naturally strengthened that confidence which every man ought to possess, to a certain degree, in his own judgment. You will very soon see the plan of a Bank published, and subscriptions opened for its establishment, having already met with the approbation of Congress. It only remains for individuals to do their part, and a foundation will be laid for the anticipation of taxes and funds, by a paper credit that cannot depreciate.

The capital proposed falls far short of your idea, and, indeed, far short of what it ought to be; but I am confident, if this is once accomplished, the capital may afterwards be increased to

almost any amount. To propose a large sum in the outset, and fail in the attempt to raise it, might prove fatal. To begin with what is clearly in our power to accomplish, and on that beginning, to establish the credit that will inevitably command the future increase of capital, seems the most certain road to success. I have thought much about interweaving a landed security with the capital of this Bank, but am apprehensive it would convey to the public mind, an idea of paper being circulated on that credit, and that the Bank, of consequence, must fail in its payments, in case of any considerable run on it: and we must expect that its ruin will be attempted, by external and internal foes. I have therefore left that point to the future deliberations of the Directors of this Bank, to whom, in due time, I shall communicate your address. I esteem myself much your debtor for this piece, not merely on account of the personal respect you have been pleased to express, but also on account of your good intentions: and for these, and the pains you have taken, I not only think, but on all proper occasions, shall say, the public are also indebted to you.

My office is new, and I am young in the execution of it. Communications from men of genius and abilities will always be acceptable; and yours will always command the attention of, Sir,

Your obedient, humble servant,

ROBERT MORRIS.

Colonel Hamilton.

SCHUYLER TO HAMILTON.

ALBANY, May 30, 1781.

DEAR SIR;

Your favor, covering copies of the letters which passed between the General and you, I received on Friday last at Saratoga, which I left, somewhat indisposed, on Sunday, and arrived in the evening. The fatigue of the journey increased my disorder, which is the quinsy, with so much rapidity, that before

Tuesday morning I was twice bled to prevent suffocation. The inflammation is subsiding, and I have been able to swallow a little broth to-day. I propose to attend the Legislature the latter end of the next week, when I shall have the pleasure of seeing you at Fishkill on the Sunday following. I believe you may prepare yourself to go to Philadelphia, as there is little doubt but you will be appointed.

The enemy are arrived at Crown Point: their number not perfectly ascertained, but I believe about two thousand. It is said they intend to fortify there. A rumor prevails that the three companies of Van Schaik's, now to the northward, are to be called down. If so, I shall instantly remove my family and stock from Saratoga, being certain, if I delay it more than four days after the troops move, that the enemy will possess themselves of the whole. Adieu.

I am, dear Sir,
Most affectionately
And sincerely,
Your obedient servant,
PH: SCHUYLER.

Colonel Hamilton.

HAMILTON TO MRS. HAMILTON.

CAMP NEAR DOBBS' FERRY, July 10, 1781.

The day before yesterday I arrived here, but for want of an opportunity could not write any sooner; indeed, I know of none now. Finding when I came here, that nothing was said on the subject of a command, I wrote the General a letter, and inclosed him my commission. This morning Tilghman came to me in his name, pressed me to retain my commission, with an assurance that he would endeavor, by all means, to give me a command, nearly such as I could have desired in the present circumstances of the army. Though I know you would be happy to hear I had rejected this proposal, it is a pleasure my reputa-

tion would not permit me to afford you. I consented to retain my commission, and accept the command. I quarter, at present, by a very polite and warm invitation, with General Lincoln, and experience from the officers of both armies every mark of esteem. * * *

A. HAMILTON.

HAMILTON TO WASHINGTON.

Camp, August 7, 1781.

SIR:

The other day I applied to Colonel Tilghman for an order for shoes, for the two companies of levies. He thought, on a general principle, it could not be granted; but as from the best of my own recollection, confirmed by inquiry of others, I have reason to believe a distinction was made last campaign in favor of the advanced corps, in the case of Cortland's regiment, I am induced to submit the matter to your Excellency.

Your Excellency is sensible that the service of an advanced corps, must be in general more active than of the line; and that, in a country like this, the article of shoes is indispensable. If the men cannot be supplied, they cannot perform the duty required of them; which will make the service fall heavier upon that part of the corps which is not under the same disability, as well as render a considerable part of it of much less utility. I will not add any personal consideration to those which affect the service; though it certainly cannot be a matter of indifference to me.

The men, I am informed, have, in general, received a bounty of about thirty pounds each, which is spent. The State makes no provision for them; and the fact is, they cannot supply themselves: they must therefore be destitute if they have not a continental supply.

The distinction last campaign, was, if I am not mistaken,

that shoes were an article of absolute necessity, and therefore to be allowed, though the articles of clothing were refused.

I have the honor to be,
Very respectfully,
Your Excellency's
Most ob't and humble serv't,
A. HAMILTON.

To General Washington.

HAMILTON TO MRS. HAMILTON.

August, 1781.

In my last letter I informed you that there was a greater prospect of activity now, than there had been heretofore. I did this to prepare your mind for an event which, I am sure, will give you pain. I begged your father, at the same time, to intimate to you, by degrees, the probability of its taking place. I used this method to prevent a surprise, which might be too severe to you. A part of the army, my dear girl, is going to Virginia, and I must, of necessity, be separated at a much greater distance from my beloved wife. I cannot announce the fatal necessity, without feeling every thing that a fond husband can feel. I am unhappy; I am unhappy beyond expression. I am unhappy, because I am to be so remote from you; because I am to hear from you less frequently than I am accustomed to do. I am miserable, because I know you will be so; I am wretched at the idea of flying so far from you, without a single hour's interview, to tell you all my pains and all my love. But I cannot ask permission to visit you. It might be thought improper to leave my corps at such a time, and upon such an occasion. I must go without seeing you—I must go without embracing you;—alas! I must go. But let no idea, other than of the distance we shall be asunder, disquiet you. Though I said the prospects of activity will be greater, I said it to give your expectations a different turn, and prepare you for something dis-

agreeable. It is ten to one that our views will be disappointed, by Cornwallis retiring to South Carolina by land. At all events, our operations will be over by the latter end of October, and I will fly to my home. Don't mention I am going to Virginia.

HAMILTON TO MRS. HAMILTON.

HEAD OF ELK, September 6, 1781.

Yesterday, my lovely wife, I wrote to you, inclosing you a letter in one to your father, to the care of Mr. Morris. To-morrow the post sets out, and to-morrow we embark for Yorktown. I cannot refuse myself the pleasure of writing you a few lines. Constantly uppermost in my thoughts and affections, I am happy only when my moments are devoted to some office that respects you. I would give the world to be able to tell you all I feel and all I wish, but consult your own heart and you will know mine. What a world will soon be between us! To support the idea, all my fortitude is insufficient. What must be the case with you, who have the most female of female hearts? I sink at the perspective of your distress, and I look to heaven to be your guardian and supporter. Circumstances that have just come to my knowledge, assure me that our operations will be expeditious, as well as our success certain. Early in November, as I promised you, we shall certainly meet. Cheer yourself with this idea, and with the assurance of never more being separated. Every day confirms me in the intention of renouncing public life, and devoting myself wholly to you. Let others waste their time and their tranquillity in a vain pursuit of power and glory; be it my object to be happy in a quiet retreat with my better angel.

A. HAMILTON.

SCHUYLER TO HAMILTON.

ALBANY, September 16, 1781.

MY DEAR SIR:

The mail which was taken a few days ago at Hampton, has probably deprived me of the pleasure of a line from you.

We are advised, by a letter from Mr. Carter, that General Washington embarked with all except the rear division of the French, at the head of Elk on the 8th inst.; hence I hope you are now operating against Cornwallis. It is difficult to judge with precision of your prospects at this distance; but matters and appearances are so favorable, that they justify a hope that the operations will be crowned with ample success.

The Legislature of this State is to convene on the 1st of October, at Poughkeepsie: delegates are to be chosen: your friends will propose you. If you should be appointed, you will have time to consider, whether to accept or refuse will be most eligible. Should Cornwallis and his army fall into our hands, peace may, and probably will, be the consequence. If so, I should most earnestly wish you in Congress: and if not, I should still prefer it to your remaining in the army, for reasons that are obvious.

I am, dear Sir,

Affectionately and sincerely,

Your obedient servant,

PH: SCHUYLER.

Colonel Hamilton.

HAMILTON TO LA FAYETTE.

CAMP BEFORE YORK TOWN, Oct. 15, 1781.

SIR:

I have the honor to render you an account of the corps under my command in your attack of last night upon the redoubt on the left of the enemy's lines.

Agreeably to your orders we advanced in two columns with unloaded arms: the right composed of Lieutenant-Colonel Gimat's battalion and my own, commanded by Major Fish; the left, of a detachment commanded by Lieutenant-Colonel Laurens, destined to take the enemy in reverse, and intercept their retreat. The column on the right was preceded by a vanguard of twenty men, led by Lieutenant Mansfield; and a detachment of sappers and miners, commanded by Captain Gilliland, for the purpose of removing obstructions.

The redoubt was commanded by Major Campbell, with a detachment of British and German troops, and was completely in a state of defence.

The rapidity and immediate success of the assault are the best comment on the behavior of the troops. Lieutenant-Colonel Laurens distinguished himself by an exact and vigorous execution of his part of the plan, by entering the enemy's work with his corps among the foremost, and making prisoner the commanding officer of the redoubt. Lieutenant-Colonel Gimat's battalion, which formed the van of the right-attack, and which fell under my immediate observation, encouraged by the decisive and animated example of their leader, advanced with an ardor and resolution superior to every obstacle. They were well seconded by Major Fish with the battalion under his command, who, when the front of the column reached the abatis, unlocking his corps to the left, as he had been directed, advanced with such celerity as to arrive in time to participate in the assault.

Lieutenant Mansfield deserves particular commendation for the coolness, firmness, and punctuality with which he conducted the vanguard. Captain Olney, who commanded the first platoon of Gimat's battalion, is entitled to peculiar applause. He led his platoon into the work with exemplary intrepidity, and received two bayonet wounds. Captain Gilliland, with the detachment of sappers and miners, acquitted themselves in a manner that did them great honor.

I do but justice to the several corps when I have the pleasure to assure you, there was not an officer nor soldier whose behavior,

if it could be particularized, would not have a claim to the warmest approbation. As it would have been attended with delay and loss, to wait for the removal of the abatis and palisades, the ardor of the troops was indulged in passing over them.

There was a happy coincidence of movements. The redoubt was in the same moment enveloped and carried in every part. The enemy are entitled to the acknowledgment of an honorable defence.

Permit me to have the satisfaction of expressing our obligations to Col. Armand, Capt. Legongne, the Chevalier De Fontevieux and Capt. Bedkin, officers of his corps, who, acting upon this occasion as volunteers, proceeded at the head of the right column, and entering the redoubt among the first, by their gallant example contributed to the success of the enterprise.

Our killed and wounded you will perceive by the inclosed return. I sensibly felt, at a critical period, the loss of the assistance of Lieutenant-Colonel Gimat, who received a musket ball in his foot, which obliged him to retire from the field. Captain Bets, of Laurens's corps, Captain Hunt and Lieutenant Mansfield, of Gimat's, were wounded with the bayonet in gallantly entering the work. Captain Kirkpatrick, of the corps of sappers and miners, received a wound in the ditch.

Inclosed is a return of the prisoners. The killed and wounded of the enemy did not exceed eight. Incapable of imitating examples of barbarity, and forgetting recent provocations, the soldiery spared every man who ceased to fight.

I have the honor to be,
With the warmest esteem and attachment,
Sir, your most ob't and humble serv't,
A. HAMILTON,
Lieut. Col. Commanding.

Major-General the Marquis De La Fayette.

Return of the killed and wounded in the advanced corps commanded by Lieutenant-Colonel Hamilton, in an attack on the enemy's left redoubt, on the evening of the 14th of Oct., 1781.

	Lieut. Col.		Majors.		Capt's.		Sub-alterns.		Ser-geants.		Rank & File.	
	Killed.	Wounded.	Killed.	Wounded.	Killed.	Wounded	Killed.	Wounded.	Killed.	Wounded.	Killed.	Wounded.
Lt. Col. Hamilton's battalion, ...												4
Lt. Col. Gimat's battalion, ...		1				2			1	1	7	15
Lt. Col. Laurens' detachment, ...						1					1	5
Corps of Sappers and Miners, ...						1						1
Total, . . .		1				4			1	1	8	25

HAMILTON TO WASHINGTON.

1782.

SIR:

I need not observe to your Excellency, that respect for the opinion of Congress will not permit me to be indifferent to the impressions they may receive of my conduct. On this principle, though I do not think the subject of the inclosed letter of sufficient importance to request an official communication of it, yet I should be happy it might in some way be known to the members of that honorable body. Should they hereafter learn, that though retained on the list of their officers, I am not in the execution of the duties of my station, I wish them to be sensible, that it is not a diminution of zeal which induces me voluntarily to withdraw my services, but that I only refrain from intruding them, when circumstances seem to have made them either not necessary or not desired; and that I shall not receive emoluments without performing the conditions to which they were

annexed. I also wish them to be apprised upon what footing my future continuance in the army is placed; that they may judge how far it is expedient to permit it. I therefore take the liberty to request the favor of your Excellency to impart the knowledge of my situation in such manner as you think most convenient.

I have the honor to be,
With perfect respect,
Your Excellency's
Most ob't and humble servant,
A. HAMILTON.

General Washington.

HAMILTON TO WASHINGTON.

PHILADELPHIA, March 1, 1782.

SIR:

Your Excellency will, I am persuaded, readily admit the force of this sentiment, that though it is the duty of a good citizen to devote his services to the public, when it has occasion for them, he cannot, with propriety or delicacy to himself, obtrude them when it either has, or appears to have, none. The difficulties I experienced last campaign in obtaining a command, will not suffer me to make any further application on that head.

As I have many reasons to consider my being employed hereafter in a precarious light, the bare possibility of rendering an equivalent will not justify, to my scruples, the receiving any future emoluments from my commission. I therefore renounce, from this time, all claim to the compensations attached to my military station during the war, or after it. But I have motives which will not permit me to resolve on a total resignation. I sincerely hope a prosperous train of affairs may continue to make it no inconvenience to decline the services of persons, whose zeal, in worse times, was found not altogether useless: but as the most promising appearances are often reversed by unforeseen disasters,

and as unfortunate events may again make the same zeal of some value, I am unwilling to put it out of my power to renew my exertions in the common cause, in the line in which I have hitherto acted.

I shall accordingly retain my rank while I am permitted to do it; and take this opportunity to declare, that I shall be at all times ready to obey the call of the public, in any capacity, civil or military (consistent with what I owe to myself), in which there may be a prospect of my contributing to the final attainment of the object for which I embarked in the service.

I have the honor to be,
Very respectfully,
Your Excellency's
Most obedient servant,
A. HAMILTON.

General Washington.

HAMILTON TO MEADE.

PHILADELPHIA, March, 1782.

A half hour since brought me the pleasure of your letter of December last. It went to Albany and came from thence to this place. I heartily felicitate you on the birth of your daughter. I can well conceive your happiness on that occasion, by that which I feel on a similar one. Indeed, the sensations of a tender father of the child of a beloved mother, can only be conceived by those who have experienced them.

Your heart, my Meade, is peculiarly formed for enjoyments of this kind. You have every right to be a happy husband—a happy father. You have every prospect of being so. I hope your felicity may never be interrupted.

You cannot imagine how entirely domestic I am growing. I lose all taste for the pursuits of ambition. I sigh for nothing but the company of my wife and my baby. The ties of duty alone,

or imagined duty, keep me from renouncing public life altogether. It is, however, probable I may not any longer be engaged in it. I have explained to you the difficulties which I met with in obtaining a command last campaign. I thought it incompatible with the delicacy due to myself, to make any application this campaign. I have expressed this sentiment in a letter to the General, and, retaining my rank only, have relinquished the emoluments of my commission, declaring myself, notwithstanding, ready at all times to obey the calls of the public. I don't expect to hear any of these, unless the state of our affairs should change for the worse, and lest by any unforeseen accident that would happen, I choose to keep myself in a situation again to contribute my aid. This prevents a total resignation.

You were right in supposing I neglected to prepare what I promised you at Philadelphia. The truth is, I was in such a hurry to get home that I could think of nothing else. As I set out to-morrow morning for Albany, I cannot from this place, send you the matter you wish.

Imagine, my dear Meade, what pleasure it *must* give Eliza and myself to know that Mrs. Meade interests herself in us. Without a personal acquaintance, we have been long attached to her. My visit at Mr. Fitzhugh's confirmed my partiality. Betsy is so fond of your family, that she proposes to form a match between her boy and your girl, provided you will engage to make the latter as amiable as her mother.

Truly, my dear Meade, I often regret that fortune has cas our residence at such a distance from each other. It would be serious addition to my happiness if we lived where I could s you every day; but fate has determined it otherwise. I am little hurried, and can only request, in addition, that you r present me most affectionately to Mrs. Meade, and believe m be,

With the warmest
And most unalterable friendship,
Yours,
A. HAMIL

LA FAYETTE TO HAMILTON.*

PARIS, April 12, 1782.

DEAR HAMILTON:

However silent you may please to be, I will nevertheless remind you of a friend who loves you tenderly, and who, by his attachment, deserves a great share in your affection. This letter, my dear sir, will be delivered or sent by Count de Segur, an intimate friend of mine, a man of wit and of abilities, and whose society you will certainly be pleased with. I warmly recommend him to you, and hope he will meet from you with more than civilities. Now let us talk politics.

The old Ministry have retired, and Lord North was not sorry at the opportunity. The new ministers are not much our friends: they are not friends to each other: they have some honest men with little sense, and some sensible men without honesty. They are forced to new measures, not only by circumstances, but also by the dispositions they have formerly announced.

Entre nous seuls. 81 [*the British Ministry*] gave a hint to 82 [*the French Ministers*], but it would not do without 54 [*America*]. Now the reverse will probably be done; after which, arrangements will take place in a few months, and I wish you was here, not so much 205 [*Secretary to Dr. Franklin*], as to the Commission. However, I would like 205 to be 125 [*Minister to the French Court*]. If you are 153 [*Member of Congress*], and if something is said to you there, I wish you may be employed in the answer. 5 [*French ships*] without 9 [*Spanish ships*] (and 4 [*Dutch*] is nothing), will not, I fear, give 40 [*Charleston.*] That is a cause of delay, and the 7 [*Spaniards*] think much more of 8 [*West Indies*]. But I hope for 26 [*Carolina*] and 22 [*Georgia*] in 18 [*September*]. 84 [*the King of France*] has answered about 47 [*peace*], as you and I, and every good American, may wish.

* The *figures* in the present letter are part of a cipher concerted between Hamilton and La Fayette. The interpretations, here placed between brackets, are written over the figures, on the originals, in General Hamilton's handwriting.—*Editor.*

In the present situation of affairs, I thought my presence was more useful to the cause in this part of the world than it could be on the other side of the Atlantic. I wish to have some matters well arranged before I go, and then I hope to set sails towards my friends in America.

Be pleased, my dear friend, to present my best respects to your lady. My compliments wait on General Schuyler and all the family. Adieu, dear Hamilton.

With the most sincere attachment,
I am, for ever,
Your devoted, affectionate servant,
LA FAYETTE.

Colonel Hamilton.

MORRIS TO HAMILTON.

OFFICE OF FINANCE, PHILADELPHIA, May 2, 1782.

SIR:

Mr. Charles Stewart, late Commissary General of Issue, has informed me you are disposed to quit the military line for the purpose of entering into civil life. He, at the same time, induced me to believe, that you would accept the office of Receiver of the Continental taxes for the State of New-York. The intention of this letter is to offer you that appointment. The duties of the office will appear, in a great degree, from the publications made by me on this subject. In addition, it will be necessary that you correspond frequently with me, and give accurate accounts of whatever may be passing in your State, which it may be necessary for this office to be acquainted with. But this, and other things of that sort, will be more fully communicated after you have signified your acceptance of the office. For the trouble of executing it, I shall allow you one-fourth per cent. on the moneys you receive. The amount of the quota called for from New-York, for the current year, is, as you know, three hundred and seventy-three thousand, five hundred and

ninety-eight dollars. I shall be glad to know your determination as soon as possible. I make to you no professions of my confidence and esteem, because I hope they are unnecessary; but if they are, my wish that you would accept the offer I make is the strongest evidence I can give of them.

I pray you, Sir, to believe me,
Very respectfully,
Your most ob't and humble serv't,
ROBERT MORRIS.

Colonel Hamilton.

HAMILTON TO MORRIS.

ALBANY, May 18, 1782.

SIR:

I had this day the honor of receiving your letter of the second instant, and am much obliged by the mark of your confidence which it contains; and to Colonel Stewart for his friendly intentions upon the occasion.

My military situation has indeed become so negative that I have no motive to continue in it; and if my services could be of importance to the public in a civil line, I should cheerfully obey its command. But the plan which I have marked out to myself is the profession of the law; and I am now engaged in a course of studies for that purpose. Time is so precious to me, that I could not put myself in the way of any interruptions, unless for an object of consequence to the public or to myself. The present is not of this nature. Such are the circumstances of this State, the benefit arising from the office you propose would not, during the war, exceed yearly one hundred pounds; for, unfortunately, I am persuaded it will not pay annually into the Continental treasury above forty thousand pounds; and on a peace establishment this will not be for some time to come much more than doubled. You will perceive, sir, that an engagement of this kind does not correspond with my views, and does not afford sufficient inducement to relinquish them.

I am not the less sensible of the obliging motives which dictated the offer; and it will be an additional one to that respect and esteem with which I have the honor to be, very truly sir,

Your most obedient, humble servant,

A. HAMILTON.

To the Hon. Robert Morris, Esq.

MORRIS TO HAMILTON.

OFFICE OF FINANCE, June 4, 1782.

SIR:

I have received your favor of the eighteenth of May. I am much obliged by the friendly sentiments you express for me, which, be assured, I shall retain a grateful sense of. I see, with you, that the office I had the pleasure of offering, will not be equal to what your abilities will gain in the profession of the law; but I did intend that the whole sum should have been paid, although the whole quota of the taxes had not been collected by the State: consequently the object is greater than you supposed, and the business might probably be effected without more attention than you could spare from your studies. If so, I should still be happy in your acceptance; and will leave the matter open until I have an opportunity of hearing from you upon the subject.

I pray you to believe that I am,

With unfeigned esteem,

Your most obedient servant,

ROBERT MORRIS.

Colonel Alexander Hamilton.

HAMILTON TO MORRIS.

ALBANY, June 17, 1782.

SIR:

The letter which you did me the honor to write me, of the fourth instant, came to my hands too late to permit me to answer it by the return of the same post. The explanation you give of your intention in your late offer, makes it an object that will fully compensate for the time it will deduct from my other occupations. In accepting it, I have only one scruple, arising from a doubt whether the service I can render, in the present state of things, will be an equivalent for the compensation. The whole system (if it may be so called) of taxation in this State is radically vicious, burthensome to the people, and unproductive to Government. As the matter now stands, there seems to be little for a Continental Receiver to do. The whole business appears to be thrown into the hands of the County Treasurers; nor do I find there is any appropriation made of any part of the taxes collected, to Continental purposes, or any provision to authorize payment to the officer you appoint: this, however, must be made. There is only one way in which I can imagine a prospect of being materially useful; that is, in seconding your applications to the State. In popular assemblies much may sometimes be brought about by personal discussions, by entering into details, and combating objections as they rise. If it should, at any time, be thought advisable by you to empower me to act in this capacity, I shall be happy to do every thing that depends on me to effectuate your views. I flatter myself, to you, sir, I need not profess that I suggest this, not from a desire to augment the importance of office, but to advance the public interest.

It is of primary moment to me, as soon as possible to take my station in the law; and on this consideration I am pressing to qualify myself for admission the next term, which will be the latter end of July. After this, if you think an interview with me necessary, I will wait upon you in Philadelphia. In the mean time, I shall be happy to receive your instructions, and

shall direct my attention more particularly to acquiring whatever information may be useful to my future operations. I have read your publications at different times, but as I have not the papers containing them in my possession, it will be necessary that their contents should be comprised in your instructions. A meeting of the Legislature is summoned early in the next month, at which, if I previously receive your orders, it may be possible to put matters in train.

I am truly indebted to you, sir, for the disposition you have manifested upon this occasion; and I shall only add an assurance of my endeavors to justify your confidence, and prove to you the sincerity of that respectful attachment with which

I am, Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

A. HAMILTON.

To Robert Morris, Esq.

HAMILTON TO COMFORT SANDS.

ALBANY, June 22, 1782.

SIR:

Mr. Morris having lately offered me the appointment of Receiver of Continental taxes for this State, I wish to collect as much and as accurate information as possible of the situation of its money concerns. It will be, among other things, of great importance that I should form an idea of the money brought into the State and carried out of it; and, with a view to this, I take the liberty to request you will furnish me with an estimate of what you have reason to think you will lay out in this State in the course of a year, in the transactions of your contract business. Mr. Duer has been so obliging as to promise me a sketch of his disbursements in this quarter, and has informed me that you are principally charged with what relates to the supplies of the main army as well as West Point; and will therefore be best able to enlighten me on that head. The calculation may not

admit of absolute precision; but if it comes near the truth it will answer. It would be useful that you could distinguish, as nearly as possible, what part will be in specie, what in bank and in other notes. As this is a matter that can be attended with no inconvenience to any person, and will be conducive to the public utility, I flatter myself you will favor me with a speedy communication.

I am, with esteem, Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

A. HAMILTON.

To Comfort Sands, Esq.

LA FAYETTE TO HAMILTON.

PARIS, June 29, 1782.

MY DEAR HAMILTON:

How it happens that I still am in Paris, I hardly can myself conceive; and what is more surprising, there are two frigates going, neither of which will carry your friend to America. Don't think, however, dear Hamilton, I am so much altered as to be kept here by pleasure or private affairs. But in the present circumstances, the American ministers have insisted upon my remaining some time longer at this court; where, they say, I may render myself more useful to our cause, than I can possibly be in America, during an inactive campaign My return, however, is only deferred for a few weeks; and after some answers have arrived from England, which, I think, will discover the views of, but not yet produce a reconciliation with, Great Britain, I intend embarking for Philadelphia, where I hope to land in the first days of September.

This stroke of Count de Grasse has greatly deranged my schemes. I hoped for 40 [*Charleston*] and perhaps for better than that; but nothing until 6 [*Jamaica*] was done. 40 [*Charleston*] I much expected. 9 [*the Spaniards*] don't like 54 [*America*]. We must previously have 40 [*Charleston*]; and then, to put them

in good humor, do something about 8 [*West Indies*]; both of which are not yet done; and after that I hope. But at all events, this campaign will be very inactive, I think. However, they are going to take Gibraltar, and will gather so many means of doing of it, that it is said they will succeed. After this trial, the forces of the House of Bourbon will be distributed with a better scale. 46 [*Negotiations*] is going on, and 47 [*Peace*] expected; but not, I think, immediately. You have a good chance, and I believe you have time, to be one of the 125 [*Commissioners*]. Jefferson does not come. Mr. Laurens, I am told, intends to return home; and I cannot conceive (*entre nous*) what he is about. Mr. Adams thinks his presence is wanting in Holland. I thought I had better give you these intelligences.

Not a word from you since we parted in Virginia; but I am a good-natured man, and will not get tired to speak to a deaf man. Adieu.

Most affectionately,

Your for ever devoted friend,

To Lieutenant-Colonel Alexander Hamilton. LA FAYETTE.

MORRIS TO HAMILTON.

OFFICE OF FINANCE, July 2, 1782.

SIR:

I yesterday received your letter of the seventeenth of June, and am very happy to find you determined to accept the office I had the pleasure of offering to you. I inclose the Commission, Instructions, etc., together with a Bond for performance of the duties, which I must request you to fill up, execute with some sufficient security, and transmit.

The complaint you make of the system of taxation in New-York, might, I believe, very justly be extended; for, though it may be more defective in some than in others, it is, I fear, very far from perfect in any. I had already heard that no part of the

taxes were appropriated to Continental purposes; but I expect that the Legislature will, when they meet, make such appropriation, as well as lay new, and, I hope, productive taxes, for the purposes of paying what may remain of their quota. It gives me a singular pleasure to find, that you have yourself pointed out one of the principal objects of your appointment. You will find that it is specified in the inclosure of the fifteenth of April. I do not conceive that any interview will be necessary, though I shall always be happy to see you, when your leisure and convenience will admit. In the mean time, I must request you to exert your talents in forwarding with your Legislature, the views of Congress. Your former situation in the army, the present situation of that very army, your connections in the State, your perfect knowledge of men and measures, and the abilities which heaven has blessed you with, will give you a fine opportunity to forward the public service, by convincing the Legislature of the necessity of copious supplies, and by convincing all who have claims on the justice of Congress, that those claims exist only by that hard necessity which arises from the negligence of the States.

When to this, you shall superadd the conviction that what remains of the war, being only a war of finance, solid arrangements of finance must necessarily terminate favorably, not only to our hopes, but even to our wishes; then, sir, the Governments will be disposed to lay, and the people to bear, those burthens which are necessary; and then the utility of your office, and of the officer, will be as manifest to others as at present to me.

With perfect respect,
Your most obedient
And humble servant,
ROBERT MORRIS.

Alexander Hamilton, Esq.,
Receiver of Taxes for New-York.

HAMILTON TO MORRIS.

ALBANY, July 13, 1782.

SIR:

I have this moment received your letter of the second inst., and as the post will set out on its return in half an hour, I have little more than time to acknowledge the receipt of it.

I shall, to-morrow morning, commence a journey to Poughkeepsie, where the Legislature are assembled; and I will endeavor, by every step in my power, to second your views; though, I am sorry to add, without very sanguine expectations. I think it probable the Legislature will do something: but whatever momentary effort they may make, till the entire change of their present system, very little will be done. To effect this, mountains of prejudice and particular interest are to be levelled. For my own part, considering the late serious misfortune of our ally, the spirit of reformation, of wisdom, and of unanimity, which seems to have succeeded to that of blunder, perverseness, and dissension in the British Government, and the universal reluctance of these States to do what is right, I cannot help viewing our situation as critical: and I feel it the duty of every citizen to exert his faculties to the utmost to support the measures, especially those solid arrangements of finance on which our safety depends.

I will, by next post, forward you the Bond executed with proper sureties.

It is not in the spirit of compliment, but of sincerity, I assure you, that the opinion I entertain of him who presides in the department, was not one of the smallest motives to my acceptance of the office; nor will that esteem and confidence which make me now sensibly feel the obliging expressions of your letter, fail to have a great share in influencing my future exertions.

I have the honor to be,
With perfect esteem and respect,
Your obedient servant,
A. HAMILTON.

To Robert Morris, Esq.

HAMILTON TO GOV. CLINTON.

POUGHKEEPSIE, July 16, 1782.

IR:

I have the honor to inclose your Excellency the copy of a arrant from the Honorable Robert Morris, Esq., Superintendent f the Finances of the United States; by which you will perceive at, agreeably to the Resolution of Congress of the second of ovember last, he has appointed me Receiver of the Continental xes for this State. I am therefore to request that the Legisture will be pleased to vest in me the authority required by at Resolution.

It is a part of my duty to explain to the Legislature, from me to time, the views of the Superintendent of Finance, in ursuance of the orders of Congress, that they may be the etter enabled to judge of the measures most proper to be dopted for an effectual co-operation. For this purpose, I pray our Excellency to impart my request, that I may have the onor of a conference with a Committee of the two Houses, at uch time and place as they may find convenient.

I have the honor to be,
With perfect respect and esteem,
Your Excellency's
Most obedient servant,
A. HAMILTON.

To his Excellency Governor Clinton.

HAMILTON TO MORRIS.

POUGHKEEPSIE, May 22, 1782.

IR:

Agreeably to my letter to you from Albany, I came to this lace, and had an interview with a Committee of the Legisla- ure, in which I urged the several matters contained in your in-

structions. I strongly represented the necessity of solid arrangements of finance; and, by way of argument, pointed out all the defects of the present system. I found every man convinced that something was wrong, but few that were willing to recognize the mischief when defined, and consent to the proper remedy. The quantum of taxes already imposed is so great as to make it useless to impose any others to a considerable amount. A bill has, however, passed both Houses, payable in specie, bank notes, or your notes, for eighteen thousand pounds. It is at present appropriated to your order; but I doubt whether some subsequent arrangement will not take place for a different appropriation. The Commander-in-Chief has applied for a quantity of forage, which the Legislature is devising the means of furnishing; and I fear it will finish by diverting the eighteen thousand pounds to that purpose. I have hitherto been able to prevent this; but as it is of indispensable importance to me to leave this place immediately, to prepare for my examination, for which I have pledged myself the ensuing term, which is at hand, it is possible, after I have left it, contrary ideas will prevail. Efforts have been made to introduce a species of negotiable certificates, which I have strenuously opposed. It has not yet taken place; but I am not clear how the matter will terminate.

Should the bill for the eighteen thousand pounds go out in its present form, I cannot hope that it will produce in the treasury above half the sum; such are the vices of our present mode of collection.

A bill has also passed the Assembly for collecting arrearages of taxes, payable in specie, bank notes, your notes; old Continental emissions at one hundred and twenty-eight for one, and a species of certificates issued by the State for the purchase of horses. This is now before the Senate. The arrearages are very large.

Both Houses have unanimously passed a set of resolutions, to be transmitted to Congress and the several States, proposing a Convention of the States, to enlarge the powers of Congress and vest them with funds. I think this a very eligible step, though I doubt of the concurrence of the other States; but I

am certain, without it, they never will be brought to co-operate in any reasonable or effectual plan. Urge reforms, or exertions, and the answer constantly is, What avails it for one State to make them without the concert of the others? It is in vain to expose the futility of this reasoning: it is founded in all those passions which have the strongest influence on the human mind.

The Legislature have also appointed, at my instance, a committee to devise, in its recess, a more effectual system of taxation, and to communicate with me on this subject. A good deal will depend on the success of this attempt. Convinced of the absurdity of multiplying taxes in the present mode, where, in effect, the payment is voluntary, and the money received exhausted in the collection, I have labored chiefly to instil the necessity of a change in the plan; and, though not so rapidly as the exigency of public affairs requires, truth seems to be making some progress.

There is no other appropriation to the use of Congress than of the eighteen thousand pounds.

I shall, as soon as possible, give you a full and just view of the situation and temper of this State. This cannot be till after my intended examination: that over, I shall lay myself out in every way that can promote your views and the public good.

I am informed you have an appointment to make of a Commissioner of Accounts for this State. Permit me to suggest the expediency of choosing a citizen of the State; a man who, to the qualifications requisite for the execution of the office, adds an influence in its affairs. I need not particularize the reasons of this suggestion. In my next I will also take the liberty to mention some characters.

I omitted mentioning that the two Houses have also passed a bill, authorizing Congress to adjust the quotas of the States on equitable principles, agreeably to your recommendation.

I have the honor to be,

With sincere attachment and respect,

Sir, your most obedient servant,

A. HAMILTON.

To the Hon. Robert Morris, Esq.

HAMILTON TO COLONEL HAY.

ALBANY, August 8, 1782.

DEAR SIR:

Mr. Morris, some time since, in a circular letter to the States, among other things, requested to have an account of all the money, provisions, transportations, etc., furnished by this State to the United States, since the eighteenth of March, seventeen hundred and eighty.

I have been very happy to hear, that this business has been intrusted to your hands: for I am sure, feeling its importance, you will give it all the dispatch in your power.

I have written to the Governor on the subject; but, lest other occupations should delay his attention to it, I must request you to inform me, precisely, what part of the matter has been intrusted to your management, and what progress you have been able to make.

I shall also thank you to send me the amount of any certificates, or paper money in any shape, which, through your office, have passed into circulation, distinguishing the different species.

You will do me a favor by letting me hear from you as soon as possible.

I am, with sincere esteem,

Your obedient servant,

A. HAMILTON.

P. S. I must still trouble you with an additional request, which is, that you let me know, as exactly as possible, the gross product of each supply-bill in your department in specie value, and the amount of all expenses on each. This I want, with a view to the subjects we have been speaking of.

A. H.

HAMILTON TO GOVERNOR CLINTON.

ALBANY, August 8, 1782.

SIR:

I have lately received a letter from the Superintendent of Finance, inclosing a copy of a circular letter from him to the several States, dated twenty-fifth July, '81, in which he requests information on the following important points.

"What supplies, of every kind, money, provisions, forage, transportation, etc., have been furnished by this State to the United States, since the eighteenth of March, 1780."

"The amount of the money in the treasury: the sums expected to be there; the times they will probably be brought in; the appropriations."

"The amount of the different paper currencies in the State; the probable increase, or decrease, of each; and the respective rates of depreciation."

"The Acts passed since the eighteenth of March, 1780, for raising taxes, furnishing supplies, etc.; the manner they have been executed; the time necessary for them to operate; the consequences of their operation; the policy of the State relative to laying, assessing, levying, and collecting taxes."

In his letter, which is *circular*, to the Receivers, he says the answers he has received to these inquiries are few and short of the object; and he therefore urges me to take the most speedy and effectual means, in my power, to enable him to form a proper judgment on such of the subjects referred to, as the actual state of things renders it important to know.

In compliance with this, I request the favor of your Excellency to inform me, what steps have been taken on the several heads of which the above is an abstract: and what progress has been made in the business; particularly with respect to the first article. I shall also be much obliged to you to direct Mr. Holt to furnish me, without delay, with the Acts mentioned in the inclosed list.

Your Excellency must have been too sensible of the necessity

of enabling the Director of the Finances of the United States to form a just judgment of the true state of our affairs, to have omitted any measure in your power to procure the fullest information on the several matters submitted to you: and I am persuaded the business is in such a train that little will be left for me to do.

I entreat you will do me the honor to let me hear from you as soon as possible on the subject.

It would promote the public business, if you would be so good as to direct Mr. Banker to supply me with such information as I might call upon him for. He is very obliging, but without some authority for the purpose, there is a delicacy in calling upon him. I wrote at the same time to Mr. Holt, printer for the State, desiring him to forward me the copies of the Acts above mentioned; and telling him, that if the Governor did not make satisfaction, I would do it. These Acts were all those relative to finance and supply, from March eighteenth, 1780, to this time.

With perfect respect,

I am your Excellency's

Most obedient servant,

A. HAMILTON.

To His Excellency Governor Clinton.

HAMILTON TO THE COUNTY TREASURERS.

ALBANY, August 5th, 1782.

SIR:

It will be of great utility to the State, and essential to the execution of my instructions from the Superintendent of Finance, that I should be able to ascertain, as speedily as possible, the expense attending the collection of taxes within this State. In order to this, I shall be much obliged to you to send me without delay an account of what you have received in your county, since the beginning of the year '80 to this time, as well for the

taxes laid for county purposes, as for those imposed by the Legislature; and of the expenses of every kind attending the collection; those of the supervisors, assessors, the allowance to the collectors and to yourself.

When I assure you I want this information for an important purpose, I doubt not you will forward it to me as speedily as it can be prepared, and with as much accuracy as circumstances will permit; by doing which, you will serve the public and oblige, Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

A. HAMILTON,
Receiver of C. S. for the State of N. Y.

HAMILTON TO MORRIS.

August 13, 1782.

DEAR SIR:

The speculation of evils, from the claims of Great Britain, gives way to the pressure of inconveniences actually suffered; and we required the event which has lately happened, the recognition of our independence by the Dutch, to give a new spring to the public hopes and the public passions. This has had a good effect. And if the Legislature can be brought to adopt a wise plan for its finances, we may put the people in better humor, and give a more regular and durable movement to the machine. The people of this State, as far as my observation goes, have as much firmness in their make, and as much submissiveness to Government, as those of any part of the Union.

It remains for me to give you an explicit opinion of what it is practicable for this State to do. Even with a judicious plan of taxation, I do not think the State can afford, or the people will bear to pay, more than seventy or eighty thousand pounds a year. In its entire and flourishing state, according to my mode of calculating, it could not have exceeded two hundred and thirty or forty thousand pounds; and, reduced as it is, with

the wheels of circulation so exceedingly clogged for want of commerce and a sufficient medium, more than I have said cannot be expected. Passed experience will not authorize a more flattering conclusion.

Out of this is to be deducted the expense of the interior administration of Government, and the money necessary for the levies of men. The first amounts to about twelve thousand pounds, as you will perceive by the inclosed statement; but I suppose the Legislature would choose to retain fifteen thousand pounds. The money hitherto yearly expended in recruits, has amounted to between twenty and thirty thousand pounds; but, on a proper plan, ten thousand pounds might suffice. There would then remain forty thousand pounds for your department.

But this is on the supposition of a change of system; for, with the present, I doubt there being paid into the Continental treasury one-third the sum.

I am endeavoring to collect materials for greater certainty upon this subject; but the business of supplies has been so diversified, lodged in such a variety of independent hands, and so carelessly transacted, that it is hardly possible to get any tolerable idea of the gross and net product. With the help of these materials I shall strive to convince the committee, when they meet, that a change of measures is essential. If they enter cordially into right views, we may succeed: but I confess I fear more than I hope.

I have taken every step in my power to procure the information you have desired in your letter of July '81; the most material part of it, an account of the supplies furnished since March seventeen hundred and eighty, has been committed to Colonel Hay. I have written to him, in pressing terms, to accelerate the preparation.

You will perceive, sir, I have neither flattered the State, nor encouraged high expectations. I thought it my duty to exhibit things as they are, not as they ought to be. I shall be sorry if it give an ill opinion of the State, for want of equal candor in the representation of others; for, however disagreeable the reflec-

tion, I have too much reason to believe, that the true picture of other States would be, in proportion to their circumstances, equally unpromising. All my inquiries, and all that appears, induces this opinion. I intend this letter *in confidence* to yourself, and therefore I endorse it private.

Before I conclude, I will say a word on a point that possibly you would wish to be informed about. The contract up this way is executed generously to the satisfaction of officers and soldiers; which is the more meritorious in the contractor, as, in all probability, it will be to him a losing undertaking.

I have the honor to be,

With sentiments of unfeigned respect,

Sir, your most ob't and humble serv't,

A. HAMILTON.

To the Hon. Robert Morris, Esq.

GOVERNOR CLINTON TO HAMILTON.

POUGHKEEPSIE, August 13, 1782.

SIR:

I have received your letter of the third instant. I am not authorized to direct the printer to deliver any of the laws, except a certain number of sets which are by law directed for particular purposes. I have, however, mentioned your desire to the gentlemen of the committee appointed to superintend the printing and distribution of them, and requested them to furnish you with a set, which I doubt not will be complied with.

Some short time before the appointment of a Superintendent of Finance, I transmitted to Congress the most perfect information I was able to collect, of many of the matters mentioned in your letter; and it was my intention, from time to time, to have continued these communications to Mr. Morris; but our laws remaining so long unprinted, the dispersed situation of the different public officers, and the difficulty, from this circumstance, as well as the want of authority, in some instances, to command

the necessary returns, rendered it a business, if not impracticable, requiring more time and attention than the indispensable duties of my office afforded leisure to bestow. I shall, however, be happy to give you every aid in my power to facilitate it. The laws, with the returns which have lately been made by the different public officers, and may be found on the files of the Legislature, and in the treasurer's office, will answer most of the questions stated. The answers to the others, appear to me to depend, in some measure, on matter of opinion; and, as the operation of our laws is often obstructed, and the intended consequences defeated, by unforeseen events arising from our embarrassed situation, they cannot be given with any great degree of precision.

You will readily perceive, sir, that the treasurer, from the nature of his office, is not, except in cases provided for by law, subject to my control. I am persuaded, however, that he, as well as the clerks of the Legislature, will readily give you every information and assistance consistent with the duties of their respective offices.

I am, with great respect and esteem,
Sir, your most obedient servant,
GEO. CLINTON.

To Col. Alexander Hamilton.

PICKERING TO HAMILTON.

NEW-WINDSOR, August 20, 1782.

DEAR SIR:

I have some Bills of Exchange, drawn by Mr. Morris on John Swanwick, which I am authorized to exchange with the receivers of the Continental Taxes in any of the States eastward of Pennsylvania. Mr. Morris informed me, that he had advised the Receivers of this measure, and directed their taking up the bills whenever they were in cash. By taxes or by loan, I expect this State will shortly furnish you with money. I am

indebted to the subjects of it by many special engagements, which I am anxious to fulfil. You will therefore greatly oblige me, by giving me, from time to time, information of the money you shall receive; and in order to secure the earliest supply, I would lodge, if you please, some of the bills in your hands. Bank notes or Mr. Morris's notes will be useful to me, though not so beneficial as cash.

I am, dear Sir,
With respect and esteem,
Your most obedient servant,
TIM. PICKERING,
Q. M. G.

Col. Alex. Hamilton.

HAMILTON TO MORRIS.

ALBANY, August 25, 1782.

SIR:

This letter serves only to transmit the two last papers. I wish the measures I have taken to satisfy you on the points you desire to be informed of, had been attended with so much success as to enable me now to transmit the result. But I find a singular confusion in the accounts kept by the public officers from whom I must necessarily derive my information, and a singular dilatoriness in complying with my application, partly from indolence, and partly from jealousy of the office. I hope, by the next post, to transmit you information on some particulars.

I have the honor to be, Sir,
Your most obedient servant,
A. HAMILTON.

To Robert Morris, Esq.

HAMILTON TO MEADE.

ALBANY, August 27, 1782.

I thank you, my dear Meade, for your letter of the first of this month, which you will perceive has travelled much faster than has been usual with our letters. Our correspondence, hitherto, has been unfortunate; nor, in fact, can either of us compliment himself on his punctuality; but you were right in concluding, that however indolence, or accident, may interrupt our intercourse, nothing will interrupt our friendship. Mine for you is built on the solid basis of a full conviction that you deserve it, and that it is reciprocal; and it is the more firmly fixed because you have few competitors. Experience is a continual comment on the worthlessness of the human race; and the few exceptions we find have the greater right to be valued in proportion as they are rare. I know few men estimable, fewer amiable; and when I meet with one of the last description, it is not in my power to withhold my affection.

* * * * * * * * * *

As to myself, I shall sit down in New-York when it opens; and this period, we are told, approaches. No man looks forward to a peace with more pleasure than I do; though no man would sacrifice less to it than myself, if I were not convinced the people sigh for peace.

I have been studying the law for some months, and have lately been licensed as an attorney. I wish to prepare myself by October for examination as a counsellor; but some public avocation may possibly prevent me.

I had almost forgotten to tell you, that I have been pretty unanimously elected, by the Legislature of this State, a member of Congress, to begin to serve in November. I do not hope to reform the State, although I shall endeavor to do all the good I

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God bless you.

A. HAMILTON.

To Colonel Meade.

MORRIS TO HAMILTON.

OFFICE OF FINANCE, August 28, 1782.

SIR:

I have duly received your several favors of the twenty-second and twenty-seventh of July, and tenth and thirteenth of August. My not answering them is owing to causes which you will easily conceive, because you will easily conceive the multiplicity of objects to which I must turn my attention. I am very sorry to learn that you can no longer continue in the office of Receiver. It would have given me great pleasure that you should have done so, because I am sure that you would have rendered very signal service to the public cause: this you will now do in another line, more important, as it is more extensive: and the justness of your sentiments on public affairs, induces my warm wish, that you may find a place in Congress so agreeable as that you may be induced to continue in it.

I should readily have complied with your wish, as to a successor, but there are many reasons which have called my attention to, and fixed my choice upon, Doctor Tillotson. We will converse on this subject when we meet. I am, however, very far from being unmindful of your recommendations; and although I cannot name the citizen of any State to settle the accounts of that particular State, consistently with the general line of conduct I have laid down for myself, yet I shall do, in other respects, what is in my power. I have not hitherto been able to fix on a proper Commissioner for the State of New-York. The office is vacant for New Hampshire and Rhode Island. I inclose you a copy of the Ordinance on the subject, that you may know the powers, duties, and emoluments; and I have to request that you offer these places to Colonel Malcolm and Mr. Lawrence. You will make the first offer, including the choice, as your own judgment may direct. Should the gentlemen, or either of them, accept, you will be so kind as to give me early notice. I will then immediately recommend them to the States respectively;

and on receiving their approbation, the proper instructions, etc., can be expedited.

I am sorry to learn that any letter of mine should have given offence; but I conclude that this effect must follow from many parts of my writings and conduct; because the steady pursuit of what appears to be the true line of duty, will necessarily cross the various oblique views of interest and opinion. To offend is sometimes a fault, always a misfortune. The letter in question is, I suppose, under the date of the eleventh of December, of which I inclose you a copy. Let me, at the same time, assure you, that in all your excellent letter of the thirteenth instant, I most esteem the clause now in question; because it contains that useful information which is least common. I will make no apologies for the letter to any one, because apologies are rarely useful; and where the intention has been good, they are, to candid minds, unnecessary. Possessed of the facts, you can guard against misrepresentation; and I have ever found that to be the most hostile weapon which either my personal or political enemies have been able to wield against me.

I have not, *even yet*, seen the Resolutions of your Legislature relative to an extension of the powers of Congress. I had supposed the same reason for them which you have expressed. Indeed, power is generally such a darling object with weak minds, that they must feel extreme reluctance to bid it farewell; neither do I believe that any thing will induce a general consent to part with it, but a perfect sense of absolute necessity. This may arise from two sources; the one of reason, and the other of feeling: the former more safe and more uncertain; the latter always severe and often dangerous. It is, my dear sir, in circumstances like this, that a patriot mind, seeking the great good of the whole, on enlightened principles, can best be distinguished from those vulgar souls whose narrow optics can see but the little circle of selfish concerns. Unhappily, such souls are but too common, and but too often fill the seats of dignity and authority. A firm, wise, manly system of federal government is what I once wished, what I now hope, what I dare not expect, but what I will not despair of.

Your description of the mode of collecting taxes, contains an epitome of the follies which prevail from one end of the continent to the other. There is no end to the absurdity of human nature. Mankind seem to delight in contrast and paradox; for surely nothing else could sanctify (during a contest on the precise point of being taxed by our own consent) the arbitrary policy which, on this subject, almost universally prevails. God grant you success in your views to amend it. Your ideas on the subject are perfectly correspondent to my own. As to your doubt on the mode of collecting it, I would wish to obviate it by the observation, that the farther off we can remove the appointment of Collectors from popular influence, the more effectual will be their operations; and the more they conform to the views of Congress, the more effectually will they enable that body to provide for general defence. In political life, the creature will generally pay some deference to both. The having a double set of officers is indeed an evil; but a good thing is not always to be rejected because of that necessary portion of evil which, in the course of things, must be attached to it. Neither is this a necessary evil; for, with a proper Federal Government, Army, Navy, and Revenue, the Civil Administration might well be provided for by a Stamp Act, Roads by Turnpikes, and Navigations by Tolls.

The account you give of the State is by no means flattering: and the more true it appears, the more concern it gives me. The loan, I hope, will be completed; and I wish the *whole* amount of the tax may be collected. The Forage plan I have disagreed to; and inclose, for your information, the copy of my letter, on that subject, to the Quartermaster General. I believe your State is exhausted: but perhaps even you consider it as being more so than it is. The Certificates, which now form a useless load, will (if the United States adopt, and the several States agree to, a plan now before Congress) become valuable property. This will afford great relief. The scarcity of money, also, may be immediately relieved, if the love of popular favor would so far give way to the love of public good, as to enforce plentiful taxation. The necessity of having money will always produce

money. The desire of having it, produces, you see, so much as is necessary to gratify the desire of enjoying foreign luxuries. Turn the stream, which now flows in the channels of Commerce, to those of Revenue, and the business is completed. Unfortunately for us, this is an operation which requires fortitude, perseverance, virtue; and which cannot be effected by the weak or wicked minds who have only partial, private, or interested views.

When I consider the exertions which the country you possess has already made, under striking disadvantages, and with astonishing prodigality of national wealth, by pernicious modes of applying it; I persuade myself, that regular, consistent efforts, would produce much more than you suppose.

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I am, with perfect respect,
Your most obedient
And humble servant,
ROBERT MORRIS.

To Alexander Hamilton, Esq.

HAMILTON TO ROBERT MORRIS.

ALBANY, August 31, 1782.

SIR:

I send you herewith all the acts of the Legislature of this State since the Government has been organized; on the margin of which I have numbered all the acts relative to the matters you mention in your letter of July, '81, to the States agreeable to the within list. I inclose you the papers of the last week.

The indolence of some, and the repugnancy of others, make every trifle lag so much in the execution, that I am not able at this time to give you any further information. I wish to hear

from you on the subject of my former letters previous to the meeting of the Committee—the 15th of the ensuing month.

I have the honor to be very truly,
Sir, your most obedient servant,
A. H.

To the Honorable Superintendent of Finance.

GOVERNOR CLINTON TO HAMILTON.

POUGHKEEPSIE, September 2, 1782.

SIR:

I am favored with your letter of the 25th instant, previous to which, with a view of accelerating the collection of the last Tax, I had prepared, and have since dispatched a circular letter to the several County Treasurers, urging them and the other officers concerned, to a prompt execution of their duty, or that in case of neglect the penalty of the law will without favor be put into execution.

I have not received information from all the Counties, but in this and some others, I know the business is in good train, and am led to hope that the taxes will be speedily collected and paid in.

My agents employed to procure moneys on loan had some time since transmitted me a small sum, but not sufficient to answer the orders of the Legislature in favor of the Delegates and some other public matters. As the channel through which this money is procured is subject to interruption and disappointment, I cannot at present inform you of any sum to be depended on, but I expect soon to see or hear from the gentlemen, and you may rest assured of being informed of the result without delay.

I am, with great respect and esteem,
Sir, your most obedient servant,
GEO. CLINTON.

Col. Hamilton.

HAMILTON TO THE COUNTY TREASURERS.

ALBANY, September 7, 1782.

SIR:

The fifteenth of this month is the period fixed for the payment of the tax imposed at the last meeting of the Legislature for the use of the United States. The public exigencies, and the reputation of the State, require that every exertion should be made to collect this tax with punctuality and dispatch; and it is, therefore, my duty to urge you, that you employ the powers vested in you, and all your personal influence, to induce the collectors to expedite the collection with all the zeal and vigor in their power. While the other States are all doing something, as a citizen of this, I shall feel a sensible mortification in being obliged to continue publishing to the others, that this State pays nothing in support of the war, as I have been under the necessity of doing the last two months. Besides this, and other still more weighty considerations, a regard to the subjects of the State itself demands every exertion in our power. They have parted with their property on the public faith, and it is impossible for the public to fulfil its engagements to individuals, unless it is enabled to do it by the equal and just contributions of the community at large.

I am, Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

A. HAMILTON.

HAMILTON TO MORRIS.

ALBANY, September 7, 1782.

SIR:

I have had the inclosed ready for some time; but in hopes of receiving the returns of the certificates mentioned in memorandum B, I delayed sending the present sketch. Having even received no answers from some of the parties, who live at a

distance from me, I suspect they have done their business in so disorderly a manner (to say nothing worse of it) that they are at a loss how to render the accounts; and I have, therefore, concluded not to detain any longer what I have procured.

I do not take the step mentioned in memorandum A, because I doubted its propriety. It might raise expectations about the old money, which, possibly, it may not enter into your plans to raise: and, besides this, by knowing what has been called in, in each State (which from the sketch I send you, will appear as to this), you can determine the balance of emissions remaining out, except what may have worn out and been accidentally destroyed. If you desire this step to be taken, I will obey your commands.

I have said nothing of the rates of depreciation, because I imagine your letter, written in July, '80, had reference to the rates at which the money was then actually circulating, and the circulation has now totally ceased. The laws I sent you by the last post, will inform you of the rates fixed at different periods by the Legislature: forty, seventy-five, and lastly, one hundred and twenty-eight. I am obliged to infer there is a studied backwardness in the officers of the State, who ought to give me the information you require respecting the supplies of different kinds which have been furnished to the use of the United States. Indeed, I find, on inquiry, that their joint information will not be so full as to satisfy your intentions; and that this cannot be done till you have appointed a commissioner of accounts, authorized to enter into all the details, aided by some legislative arrangement which may be obtained the next session.

I have the honor to be,
With great respect and esteem,
Sir, your most obedient servant,
A. HAMILTON.

To Robert Morris, Esq.

HAMILTON TO TIMOTHY PICKERING.

ALBANY, September 7, 1782.

DEAR SIR:

I this day received your letter of the 20th August. Mr. Morris has advised me of the bills you describe, and directed my purchasing them, together with his notes, and the bank notes; with what money shall come into my hands on public account. They are now beginning to collect the tax imposed for the use of the United States, though I can as yet form no judgment with what success or expedition. I shall with pleasure give you the information you ask, but I would rather wish to be excused from anticipation by previous deposits in my hands, as that will in some measure pledge me to give a preference to the bills deposited, and may hereafter expose me to a charge of partiality. There have been several applications to me for a similar anticipation which I have avoided; reserving to myself the power of paying the bills as they shall be presented, and in proportion to the nearness or remoteness of the periods of payments.

You may, however, depend that I shall be happy to assist your department, and will keep in view your present request. I hope, towards the latter end of the month, I shall receive something considerable on the late tax.

I am, dear Sir, very truly,

Your obedient servant,

A. HAMILTON.

To Timothy Pickering,

D. Q. Gen.

HAMILTON TO ROBERT MORRIS.

ALBANY, Sept. 14, 1782.

SIR:

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 29th of August, the contents of which shall be executed.

I have just received by the post accounts of the specific sup-

plies furnished by the State; copies of which I shall prepare to be transmitted to you by the next post, as I am to return the originals, which are for the inspection of the Legislature. I hope to add to these accounts of the moneys supplied.

I have written to you a number of letters since my journey to Poughkeepsie, of which, as they contain some things of a confidential nature, I am not without anxiety to learn the safe arrival.

I should also have been happy to have received your instructions against the meeting of the Committee, which is to take place to-morrow. As they will have other business, if I hear from you by the next post, I shall not be too late. I am at a loss to know whether I ought to press the establishment of permanent *funds* or not; though unless I receive your instructions, following my own apprehensions of what are probably your views, I shall dwell on this article.

I have the honor to be,
With perfect respect,
Sir, your most ob't serv't,
A. HAMILTON.

I inclose you a copy of a letter of the Governor, of the 2d inst., from which you will see his hopes. Mine are not so good. In this vicinity, always delinquent, little is doing.

HAMILTON TO ROBERT MORRIS.

ALBANY, Sept. 21, 1782.

SIR:

The hurry in which I wrote to you by the last post, prevented my examining particularly the papers which I informed you I had received. On a more careful inspection of them, I found them not so complete as I had hoped. There is a general state of specific supplies; but the returns referred to in that for the particulars, were by some mistake omitted. I have written

for them, but they have not yet arrived; when they do, I shall lose no time in forwarding them.

I observe there is nothing respecting transportation; and there is a part of the supplies for the period before Col. Hay came into office, which is estimated on a scale of proportion—too vague a method to be satisfactory. I have urged him to send me an account of the transportation, and to collect, as speedily as possible, official returns of the supplies above mentioned.

There is a practice obtaining which appears to me to contravene your views. The Contractors, I am informed, have gotten into a method of carrying your bills immediately to the Collectors and drawing the specie out of their hands, by which means the paper never goes into circulation at all; but passes, so to speak, immediately out of one hand of the public into the other. The people, therefore, can never be familiarized to the paper, nor can it ever obtain a general currency.

If the specie were to come into the Receivers' hands, and the Contractors were left under a necessity of exerting their influence to induce the inhabitants to take your notes, to be afterwards redeemed by the Receivers agreeably to your plan, this would gradually accustom the people to place confidence in the notes; and though the circulation at first should be momentary, it might come to be more permanent.

I am in doubt, whether on the mere speculation of an evil, without your instructions, I ought to take any step to prevent this practice. For, should I forbid the exchange, it might possibly cause a suspicion that there was a preference of the paper to the specie, which might injure its credit.

I have thought of a method to prevent, without forbidding it in direct terms. This was to require each collector to return the names of the persons from whom he received taxes, and in different columns, specify the kind of money, whether specie, your notes, or bank notes, in which the tax was paid; giving the inhabitants receipts accordingly; and paying in money in the same species in which it was received. This would cover the object.

I have tried to prevail upon the county treasurer of this

place, to instruct the collectors accordingly; but the great aim of all these people is to avoid trouble; and he affected to consider the matter as a Herculean labor. Nor will it be done without a legislative injunction.

A method of this kind would tend much to check fraud in the collectors; and would have many good consequences.

I thought it my duty, at any rate, to apprise you of the practice, that, if my apprehensions are right, it may not be continued without control. I have reason to believe it is very extensive—by no means confined to this State.

Permit me to make one more observation. Your notes, though in credit with the merchants by way of remittance, do not enter far into ordinary circulation, and this principally on account of their size; which even makes them inconvenient for paying taxes. The taxes of very few amount to twenty dollars a single tax; and though the farmers might combine to sell their produce for the notes, to pay the taxes jointly; yet this is not always convenient, and will seldom be practised. If the notes were, in considerable part, of five, eight, or ten dollars, their circulation would be far more general; the merchants would, even in their retail operations, give specie in exchange for balances; which few of them care to do, or can do, with the larger notes; though they are willing to take them for their goods.

A. HAMILTON.

HAMILTON TO MORRIS.

September 28, 1782.

SIR:

I have been honored this week with your letters of the twenty-eighth of August, and the sixth, twelfth, and seventeenth instant, with their inclosures.

It gives me the most real pleasure to find that my past communications have met with your approbation; and I feel a particular satisfaction in the friendly confidence which your letters manifest.

I am persuaded that substantial reasons have determined your choice in a particular instance to Doctor Tillotson; and I am flattered by the attention you have obligingly paid to my recommendations of Colonel Malcolm and Mr. Lawrence. Those gentlemen are now here. They make you the warmest acknowledgments for your offer, but decline leaving the State; which, indeed, is not compatible with the present prospects of either of them.

I am glad to have had an opportunity of perusing your letter to this State, at which so much exception has been taken; because it has confirmed me in what I presumed, that there has been much unjustifiable ill-humor upon the occasion. I will make use of the knowledge I have to combat misrepresentation.

Yours of the twenty-ninth of July to Congress, is full of principles and arguments as luminous as they are conclusive. It is to be lamented that they have not had more weight than we are to infer from the momentary expedient adopted by the resolutions of the fourth and tenth; which will, alone, not be satisfactory to the public creditors; and I fear will only tend to embarrass your present operations, without answering the end in view. The more I see, the more I find reason for those who love this country to weep over its blindness.

The committee on the subject of taxation are met. Some have their plans; and they must protect their own children, however misshapen: others have none; but are determined to find fault with all. I expect little, but I shall promote any thing, though imperfect, that will mend our situation.

With sentiments of
The greatest respect and esteem,
I have the honor to be, Sir,
Your most obedient servant,
A. HAMILTON.

P. S. The public creditors in this quarter, have had a meeting, and appointed a committee to devise measures. The committee will report petitions to Congress and the Legislature; and an address to the public creditors in other parts of the State, to

appoint persons to meet in convention, to unite in some common measure. I believe they will also propose a general convention of all the creditors in the different States.

A. H.

To the Hon. Robert Morris, Esq.

HAMILTON TO MORRIS.

ALBANY, Oct. 5, 1782.

SIR:

In my last I informed you, that the committee, appointed by the Legislature on the subject of taxation, were together. In spite of my efforts, they have parted without doing any thing decisive. They have, indeed, agreed upon several matters, and those of importance; but they have not reduced them to the form of a report; which, in fact, leaves every thing afloat, to be governed by the impressions of the moment, when the Legislature meets.

The points agreed upon, are these: That there shall be an actual valuation of land, and a tax of so much in the pound.

The great diversity in the qualities of land would not suffer them to listen to an estimated valuation, or to a tax by the quantity, agreeably to the idea in your late report to Congress. That there shall be also a tariff of all personal property, to be also taxed at so much in the pound; that there shall be a specific tax on carriages, clocks, watches, and other similar articles of luxury; that money, at usury, shall be taxed at a fixed rate in the pound, excluding that which is loaned to the public; that houses, in all towns, shall be taxed at a certain proportion of the annual rent; that there shall be a poll tax on all single men from fifteen upwards; and that the collection of the taxes should be advertised to the lowest bidder, at a fixed rate per cent., bearing all subordinate expenses.

Among other things which were rejected, I pressed hard for

an excise on distilled liquors; but all that could be carried on this article was a license on taverns.

The committee were pretty generally of opinion, that the system of funding for payment of old debts, and for procuring further credit, was wise and indispensable; but a majority thought it would be unwise in one State to contribute in this way alone.

Nothing was decided on the quantum of taxes which the State was able to pay: those who went furthest, did not exceed seventy thousand pounds, of which fifty for the use of the United States.

I send you my cash account, which is for what has been received in this county. We have not heard from the others.

I have the honor to be, Sir,
Your most obedient servant,
A. HAMILTON.

To the Hon. Robert Morris, Esq.

MORRIS TO HAMILTON.

OFFICE OF FINANCE, October 5, 1782.

SIR:

I have now before me your letters of the fourteenth and twenty-first of last month. I am sorry to find that you are less sanguine in your pecuniary expectations than the Governor appears to be; for I have always found that the worst forebodings on this subject are the truest. You will find, at the bottom of this letter, a list of all those which I have hitherto received from you. I think they have all been already acknowledged; but lest they should not, you will see in one moment, by the list, whether any have miscarried.

I am not surprised to find that the contractors apply with their paper, in the first instance, to the Receivers and Collectors. This I expected, because much of that paper is not fit for other purposes. Some of it, however, which is payable to the bearer,

is calculated for circulation; which you observe is not so general as otherwise it might have been, by reason of the largeness of the sums expressed in the notes. Mr. Duer's letters contain the same sentiment.

In issuing this paper, one principal view was to facilitate the payment of taxes by obviating the too general (though unjust) complaint of the want of a circulating medium. In substituting paper to specie, the first obstacle to be encountered, was the total diffidence which had arisen from the late profusion of it. Had a considerable quantity been thrown into the hands of that class of the people, whose ideas on the subject of money, are more the offspring of habit than of reason, it must have depreciated. That this apprehension was just, is clear from this fact, that the paper I first issued, and the Bank paper which came out after it, did depreciate from ten to fifteen per cent. in the Eastern States, notwithstanding all the precautions which were used. If I had not taken immediate measures to create a demand for it on the spot, and to stop issues to that quarter, its credit would have been totally lost for a time, and not easily restored. Besides that, the quantities which were pouring in from thence would have done mischief here. Confidence is a plant of very slow growth; and our political situation is not too favorable to it. I am, therefore, very unwilling to hazard the germ of a credit, which will, in its greater maturity, become very useful. If my notes circulate only among mercantile people, I do not regret it, but rather wish that the circulation may, for the present, be confined to them, and to the wealthier members of other professions. It is nothing but the greater convenience, which will induce people to prefer any kind of paper to the precious metals; and this convenience is principally felt in large sums. Whenever the shopkeepers, in general, discover that my paper will answer as a remittance to the principal ports, and will be readily exchanged by the Receivers, they will as readily exchange it for other people. When the people, in general, find that the shopkeepers receive it freely, they will begin to look after it, and not before. For you must know, that whatever fine plausible speeches may be made on this subject, the farmers will not give full credit to money,

merely because it will pay taxes: for that is an object they are not very violently devoted to. But that money which goes freely at the store and the tavern, will be sought after as greedily as those things which the store and the tavern contain. Still, however, your objection remains good; that the traffickings in which the greater part of the community engage, do not require sums so large as twenty dollars. This I shall readily acknowledge: but you will observe there is infinitely less danger that large notes, which go only through the hands of intelligent people, will be counterfeited than small ones, which come to the possession of illiterate men. When public credit is firmly established, the little shocks it receives from the counterfeiters of paper money, do not lead to material consequences; but, in the present ticklish state of things, there is just ground of apprehension. Besides this, the value of paper will depend much upon the interchanges of it for specie: and these will not take place when there is a circulation of small paper. Lastly, I have to observe, that until more reliance can be placed on the revenues required, I dare not issue any very considerable amount of this paper, lest I should be run upon for more than I could answer: and as the circulation of what I dare issue, by increasing the general mass, enables people (so far as it goes) more easily to get hold of other money, it consequently produces, in its degree, that object of facilitating taxation which I had in view.

I am, Sir,

Your most obedient, humble servant,

ROBERT MORRIS.

Alexander Hamilton, Esq.,
Receiver for New-York.

HAMILTON TO DE NOAILLES.

1782.

Esteem for your talents and acquirements is a sentiment which, from my earliest acquaintance with you, my dear Viscount, I have shared in common with all those who have the

happiness of knowing you; but a better knowledge of your character has given it, in my eyes, a more intrinsic merit, and has attached me to you by a friendship founded upon qualities as rare as they are estimable. Averse as I am to professions, I cannot forbear indulging this declaration, to express to you the pleasure I felt at receiving (after an inexplicable delay) the letter you were so obliging as to write me before your departure from Boston. It was of that kind which is always produced by those attentions of friends we value; which, not being invited by circumstances, nor necessitated by the forms of society, bespeak the warmth of the heart. At least my partiality for you makes me fond of viewing it in this light, and I cherish the opinion.

I was chagrined to find that you left us with an intention not to return. Though I should be happy if, by a removal of the war, this country should cease to be a proper theatre for your exertions, yet, if it continues to be so, I hope you will find sufficient motives to engage you to change your resolution. Wherever you are, you will be useful and distinguished; but the ardent desire I have of meeting you again, makes me wish America may be your destination. I would willingly do it in France, as you invite me to do; but the prospect of this is remote. I must make a more solid establishment here before I can conveniently go abroad. There is no country I have a greater curiosity to see, or which I am persuaded would be so interesting to me as yours. I should be happy to renew and improve the valuable acquaintances from thence, which this war has given me an opportunity of making; and, though I could not flatter myself with deriving any advantage from it, I am persuaded it is there I should meet with the greatest number of those you describe, who, etc.: but considerations of primary importance will oblige me to submit to the mortification of deferring my visit.

In the mean time I should be too much the gainer by communication with you, not gladly to embrace the offer you so politely make for writing to each other.

The period, since you left us, has been too barren of events to enable me to impart any thing worth attention. The enemy

continue in possession of Charleston and Savannah, and leave us masters of the rest of the country. General Greene has detached Wayne to Georgia; but I believe his views do not extend beyond the mere possession of the country. It is said the Assemblies of the two invaded States are about meeting, to restore the administration of government. This will be a step to strengthening the hands of General Greene, and counteracting the future intrigues of the enemy. Many are sanguine in believing that all the southern posts will be evacuated, and that a fleet of transports is actually gone to bring the garrisons away. For my part, I have doubts upon the subject. My politics are, that while the present ministry can maintain their seats, and procure supplies, they will prosecute the war on the mere chance of events; and that while this is the plan, they will not evacuate posts so essential as points of departure; from whence, on any favorable turn of affairs, to renew their attack on our most vulnerable side. Nor will they relinquish objects that would be so useful to them, should the worst happen in a final negotiation. Clinton, it is said, is cutting a canal across New-York island, through the low grounds, about a mile and a half from the city. This will be an additional obstacle; but if we have, otherwise, the necessary means to operate, it will not be an insurmountable one. I do not hear that he is constructing any other new works of consequence. To you, who are so thoroughly acquainted with the military posture of things in this country, I need not say that the activity of the next campaign must absolutely depend on effectual succors from France. I am convinced we shall have a powerful advocate in you. La Fayette, we know, will bring 'the whole house' with him if he can.

There has been no material change in our internal situation since you left us. The capital successes we have had, have served rather to increase the hopes than the exertions of the particular States. But in one respect we are in a mending way. Our financier has hitherto conducted himself with great ability, has acquired an entire personal confidence; revived, in some measure, the public credit; and is conciliating fast the support of the moneyed men. His operations have hitherto hinged

chiefly on the seasonable aids from your country; but he is urging the establishment of permanent funds among ourselves: and though, from the nature and temper of our governments, his applications will meet with a dilatory compliance, it is to be hoped they will by degrees succeed.

The institution of a Bank has been very serviceable to him: the commercial interest, finding great advantages in it, and anticipating much greater, is disposed to promote the plan; and nothing but moderate funds, permanently pledged for the security of lenders, is wanting to make it an engine of the most extensive and solid utility. By the last advices there is reason to believe the delinquent States will shortly comply with the requisition of Congress for a duty on our imports. This will be a great resource to Mr. Morris; but it will not alone be sufficient.

Upon the whole, however, if the war continues another year, it will be necessary that Congress should again recur to the generosity of France for pecuniary assistance. The plans of the financier cannot be so matured as to enable us, by any possibility, to dispense with this; and if he should fail for want of support, we must replunge into that confusion and distress which had like to have proved fatal to us, and out of which we are slowly emerging. The cure, on a relapse, would be infinitely more difficult than ever.

I have given you an uninteresting but a faithful sketch of our situation. You may expect, from time to time, to receive from me the progress of our affairs; and I know you will overpay me.

I am, my dear Viscount,
Yours faithfully,
A. HAMILTON.

To the Viscount De Noailles.

HAMILTON TO GREENE.

ALBANY, October 12, 1782.

DEAR GENERAL:

It is an age since I have either written to you or received a line from you; yet I persuade myself you have not been the less convinced of my affectionate attachment, and warm participation in all those events which have given you that place in your country's esteem and approbation which I have known you to deserve, while your enemies and rivals were most active in sullying your reputation.

You will perhaps learn, before this reaches you, that I have been appointed a Member of Congress. I expect to go to Philadelphia in the ensuing month, where I shall be happy to correspond with you with our ancient confidence; and I shall entreat you not to confine your observations to military subjects, but to take in the whole scope of national concerns. I am sure your ideas will be useful to me and to the public.

I feel the deepest affliction at the news we have just received of the loss of our dear and estimable friend Laurens. His career of virtue is at an end. How strangely are human affairs conducted, that so many excellent qualities could not insure a more happy fate! The world will feel the loss of a man who has left few like him behind, and America of a citizen whose heart realized that patriotism of which others only talk. I shall feel the loss of a friend I truly and most tenderly loved, and one of a very small number.

* * * * * * *

I am, dear Sir,

Truly your friend and servant,

A. HAMILTON.

To General Greene.

HAMILTON TO ROBERT MORRIS.

ALBANY, October 26, 1782.

SIR:

I am honored with your letters of the 5th, 15th, and 16th instant.

The detail you have been pleased to enter into in that of the 15th, exhibits very cogent reasons for confining yourself to pretty large denominations of notes; some of them had occurred to me, others had not; but I thought it my duty to state to you the operation which that circumstance had; as in the midst of the variety and extent of the objects which occupy your attention, you may not have so good opportunities of seeing the effect of your plans in detail. While I acknowledge that your observations have corrected my ideas upon the subject, and shown me that there would be danger in generally lessening the denominations of the paper issued, I should be uncandid not to add, that it still appears to me, there would be a preponderance of advantages in having a part of a smaller amount. I shall not trouble you at present with any further reasons for this opinion.

I have immediately on the receipt of your letter taken measures for the publication of your advertisement in the newspapers of this State.

You will perceive by the inclosed cash account that I have received five and twenty hundred dollars; this was procured in part of the loan I mentioned to you. It was chiefly paid to me in specie, and I have exchanged it with Colonel Pickering and Mr. Duer for your notes; the latter had twelve hundred dollars. Taxes collect slowly, but I must shortly receive two or three hundred pounds more, of which Mr. Duer will have the principal benefit, as it appears by your letter to him, that you hoped he might receive three thousand dollars from me.

As I may shortly set out for Philadelphia, I wish to surren-

der to Mr. Tillotson, as soon as you think proper, the office in which he is to succeed.

I have the honor to be,
With sincere respect and esteem,
Sir, your most obedient servant,
ALEX. HAMILTON.

HAMILTON TO LA FAYETTE.

ALBANY, November 8, 1782.

Since we parted, my dear Marquis, at Yorktown, I have received three letters from you; one written on your way to Boston, two from France. I acknowledge that I have written to you only once; but the reason has been, that I have been taught daily to expect your return. This I should not have done from my own calculations; for I saw no prospect but of an inactive campaign; and you had much better be intriguing for your hobby-horse at Paris, than loitering away your time here. Yet they seem to be convinced, at head quarters, that you were certainly coming out; and by your letters it appears to have been your own expectation. I imagine you have relinquished it by this time.

I have been employed for the last ten months in rocking the cradle and studying the art of *fleecing* my neighbors. I am now a grave counsellor-at-law, and shall soon be a grave member of Congress. The Legislature, at their last session, took it into their heads to name me, pretty unanimously, one of their delegates.

I am going to throw away a few months more in public life, and then retire a simple citizen and good *paterfamilias*. I set out for Philadelphia in a few days. You see the disposition I am in. You are condemned to run the race of ambition all your life. I am already tired of the career, and dare to leave it.

But you would not give a pin for my letter unless politics or war made a part of it. You tell me they are employed in building *a peace:* and other accounts say it is nearly finished. I hope the work may meet with no interruptions. It is necessary for America; especially if your army is taken from us, as we are told will soon be the case. That was an essential *point d'appui*, though money was the *primum mobile* of our finances, which must now lose the little activity lately given them. Our trade is prodigiously cramped. These States are in no humor for continuing exertions. If the war lasts, it must be carried on by external succors. I make no apology for the inertness of this country: I detest it: but since it exists, I am sorry to see other resources diminish.

Your Ministers ought to know best what they are doing; but if the war goes on, and the removal of the army does not prove an unwise measure, I renounce all future pretensions to judgment. I think, however, the circumstances of the enemy oblige them to peace.

We have been hoping that they would abandon their posts in these States. It no doubt was once in contemplation, but latter appearances are rather ambiguous. I begin to suspect that if peace is not made, New-York and Charleston, the former at least, will still be held.

There is no probability that I shall be one of the Commissioners of Peace. It is a thing I do not desire myself, and which I imagine other people will not desire.

Our army is now in excellent order, but small.

The temper we are in respecting the alliance, you will see from public acts. There never was a time of greater unanimity on that point.

I wish I durst enter into a greater detail with you; but our cipher is not fit for it, and I fear to trust it in another shape.

Is there any thing you wish on this side the water? You know the warmth and sincerity of my attachment. Command me.

I have not been so happy as to see Mr. De Segur. The title

of your friend would have been a title to every thing in my power to manifest.

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Yours *pour la vie*,
A. HAMILTON.

P. S. I wrote a long letter to the Viscount De Noailles, whom I also love. Has he received it? Is the worthy Gouvion well? Has he succeeded? How is it with our friend Gimat? How is it with General Du Portail? All those men are men of merit, and interest my best wishes.

Poor Laurens! He has fallen a sacrifice to his ardor in a trifling skirmish in South Carolina. You know how truly I loved him, and will judge how much I regret him.

I will write you again soon after my arrival at Philadelphia.
A. H.

To the Marquis De La Fayette.

HAMILTON TO THE GOVERNOR OF RHODE ISLAND.

PHILADELPHIA, Dec. 11, 1782.

SIR:

Congress are equally affected and alarmed by the information they have received, that the Legislature of your State, at their last meeting, have refused their concurrence in establishing a duty on imports. They consider this measure as so indispensable to the prosecution of the war, that a sense of duty, and regard to the common safety, compel them to renew their efforts to engage a compliance with it. And in this view, they have determined to send a deputation of three members to your State, as expressed in the inclosed resolution. The gentlemen they have appointed will be able to lay before you a full and just representation of public affairs, from which, they flatter themselves, will result a conviction of the propriety of their solicitude upon the present

occasion. Convinced by past experience of the zeal and patriotism of the State of Rhode Island, they cannot doubt that it will yield to those urgent considerations which flow from a knowledge of our true situation.

They will only briefly observe that the increasing discontents of the army, the loud clamors of the public creditors, and the extreme disproportion between the public supplies and the demands of the public service, are so many invincible arguments for the fund recommended by Congress. They feel themselves unable to devise any other that will be more efficacious, less exceptionable, or more generally agreeable; and if this is refused, they anticipate calamities of a most menacing nature—with this consolation, however, that they have faithfully discharged their trust, and that the mischiefs which follow cannot be attributed to them.

A principal object of the proposed fund is to *procure loans abroad.* If no security can be held out to lenders, the success of these must necessarily be very limited. The last accounts on the subject were not flattering; and when intelligence shall arrive in Europe, that the State of Rhode Island has disagreed to the only fund which has yet been devised, there is every reason to apprehend it will have a fatal influence upon their future progress.

Deprived of this resource, our affairs must in all probability hasten to a dangerous crisis, and these States be involved in greater embarrassments than they have yet experienced, and from which it may be much more difficult to emerge. Congress will only add a request to your Excellency, that if the Legislature should not be sitting, it may be called together as speedily as possible, to enable the gentlemen whom they have deputed to perform the purpose of their mission.

GOVERNOR CLINTON TO HAMILTON.

POUGHKEEPSIE, December 29, 1782.

DEAR SIR:

Before I was honored by your letter of the eighteenth instant, I had received a line from Colonel Floyd on the same subject. As my answer to his is forwarded by the present conveyance, I beg leave to refer you to it for information. I hope it may prove satisfactory; and I flatter myself no further disappointment can take place. Should I, however, be mistaken, you have only to advise me of it, and I will immediately forward the cash.

Phelps, who was delayed on the road by the late heavy fall of snow, waited on me a few days since, and delivered me your official dispatches of the ninth instant. Considering the disposition heretofore discovered by Congress, on the subject of our controversy with the grants, their resolutions which you inclosed me, though short of what we are justly entitled to, exceed my expectations; and I am not without hope, if properly improved, may be the mean of leading to a just and favorable issue. The idea of many of the military being interested in the independency of Vermont, in consequence of their having taken grants of lands under them, I believe is without foundation. There was a period when the disposition of Congress, founded on political expedience, appeared so favorable to the independence of that district, as to have induced some gentlemen of the army to apply to the usurped government for grants. But when it was discovered that they were intriguing with the common enemy, the more respectable characters withdrew their applications, and relinquished all kind of connection with them; and even those who did not go so far, I imagine conceive themselves perfectly secure under our late acts. If, however, this should not be the case, any difficulty which may be apprehended from it may be easily obviated; as I am persuaded the Legislature are disposed to every liberal act that may consist with the honor of the State, and tend to facilitate a settlement of the dispute. There was a time, not long since, when Congress had only to have spoken decicisely

on the subject, and they would have been obeyed: nor do I believe the time is yet past, if they could be convinced that Congress were in earnest. But if force is necessary to carry their decision into execution, the longer it is delayed the more force it will require. The misfortune is, though I believe there are but few States that favor their independence, some members of those who do, take great pains to encourage the revolters in their opposition, by secret assurances that Congress will not direct any coercive measures against them: and I am not without my fears that this conduct will, in some measure, defeat the present resolutions.

I am, with great respect and esteem,

Dear Sir, your most obedient servant,

GEORGE CLINTON.

To the Hon. Alexander Hamilton, Esq.

LA FAYETTE TO HAMILTON.

(Most Private.)

CADIX, Feb. 5, 1783.

Your friendship to me, my dear sir, and the affection I have for you, command my most *confidential* communications. As public affairs have the first place with me, let me tell you that our Articles of Confederation ought to be revised, and measures immediately taken to invigorate the Continental Union; depend upon it, there lies the danger for America; this last stroke is wanting, and unless the States be strongly bound to each other, we have much to fear from British, and, indeed, from European politics. There ought to be delegates from each State, and perhaps some officers among them, one of whom I would be happy to be, who, toward next fall, would meet together, and under the presidence of General Washington, may devise upon amendments to be proposed in the Articles of Confederation—limits of States, &c., &c., &c. As to the army, I hope their country will be grateful, I hope the half pay affair may be terminated to their satisfaction.

Now, my dear sir, I am going to torment you with my private concerns. First of all, I wish the people of America to know that, when I have lengthened my furlough, it was for their service, and at the request of their commissioners; that upon my embarking in a fresh expedition, it was with a view to join you in the summer, with forces adequate to every plan General Washington had directed me to promote; that, moreover, a Canadian expedition was to take place; that then, instead of sending a vessel, I was going myself to America. But that entreaties from your residence at Madrid have forced me to go there, and probably from there to Paris; but that in the month of June, I am to embark for America. I confess, my dear sir, I have a great value for my American popularity, and I want the people at large to know my affection to them and my zeal for their service. The best way to manage it is to have a resolve of Congress published, by way of answer to my letters, wherein their approbation of my conduct will comprehend the above mentioned matters.

There is another thing which would highly flatter me, and lies within your department; a ratification of the treaty will be sent by Congress to the Court of England; it is but an honorary commission, that requires only a few weeks, and even a few days' attendance. The sedentary Minister you may send, or with me, or after me, or, what I would like better, at the time when Great Britain has sent hers to you. So many greater proofs of confidence have been bestowed upon me by Congress, that I may truly tell you my wishes upon this very pleasing mark of their esteem. Upon my leaving England, I have been considered there as an enthusiastic rebel, and, indeed, a young madman. I would well enough like to present myself there in the capacity of an Extraordinary Envoy from the United States; and though upon my committing so far the French Ambassador, I have been with him on pretty bad terms; now our friendship has revived, and I am in a situation to lead him into my measures, and to know his secrets without telling him mine.

As to the choice of a Minister, (this commission being only a compliment,) I think it is a very difficult task. I advise to take

a gentleman who had no connection with the great men in England; our friend Hamilton would be a very proper choice; you ought to bring it about. Are you acquainted with Col. Harrison, who was in the General's family; there are few men so honest and sensible; but I hope you may send Hamilton, and he knows better than all the British councils.

In case Congress were pleased to do for me what I have so much at heart, I would beg you to send Mr. McHenry to me, a member in the Maryland Senate. This, my dear sir, is entirely confidential for you, and *for you alone;* should the General be in Philadelphia, you may show it to him. Adieu. My best respects wait upon your lady and family.

Most affectionately,

I am yours,

LA FAYETTE.

Should you think it of any use to have printed the last paragraph of my letter to Congress, I will be glad of it, as the opinion of one who knows Europe may have some weight with the people.

HAMILTON TO WASHINGTON.

PHILADELPHIA, February 7, 1783.

SIR:

Flattering myself that your knowledge of me will induce you to receive the observations I make, as dictated by a regard to the public good, I take the liberty to suggest to you my ideas on some matters of delicacy and importance. I view the present juncture as a very interesting one. I need not observe how far the temper and situation of the army make it so. The state of our finances was perhaps never more critical. I am under injunctions which will not permit me to disclose some facts that would at once demonstrate this position; but I think it probable you will be possessed of them through another channel. It is,

however, certain, that there has scarcely been a period of the revolution which called more for wisdom and decision in Congress. Unfortunately for us, we are a body not governed by reason or foresight, but by circumstances. It is probable we shall not take the proper measures; and if we do not, a few months may open an embarrassing scene. This will be the case, whether we have peace or a continuance of the war.

If the war continues, it would seem that the army must, in June, subsist itself, *to defend the country.* If peace should take place, it *will* subsist itself, *to procure justice to itself.* It appears to be a prevailing opinion in the army, that the disposition to recompense their services, will cease with the necessity for them; and that if they once lay down their arms, they part with the means of obtaining justice. It is to be lamented that appearances afford too much ground for their distrust.

It becomes a serious inquiry, What is the true line of policy? The claims of the army, urged with moderation, but with firmness, may operate on those weak minds which are influenced by their apprehensions more than by their judgments, so as to produce a concurrence in the measures which the exigencies of affairs demand. They may add weight to the applications of Congress to the several States. So far a useful turn may be given to them. But the difficulty will be, to keep a *complaining* and *suffering army* within the bounds of moderation.

This your Excellency's influence must effect. In order to it, it will be advisable not to discountenance their endeavors to procure redress, but rather, by the intervention of confidential and prudent persons, *to take the direction of them.* This, however, must not appear. It is of moment to the public tranquillity, that your Excellency should preserve the confidence of the army without losing that of the people. This will enable you, in case of extremity, to guide the torrent, and to bring order, perhaps even good, out of confusion. 'Tis a part that requires address; but 'tis one which your own situation, as well as the welfare of the community, points out.

I will not conceal from your Excellency a truth which it is necessary you should know. An idea is propagated in the army,

that delicacy, carried to an extreme, prevents your espousing its interests with sufficient warmth. The falsehood of this opinion no one can be better acquainted with than myself; but it is not the less mischievous for being false. Its tendency is to impair that influence which you may exert with advantage, should any commotions unhappily ensue, to moderate the pretensions of the army, and make their conduct correspond with their duty.

The great *desideratum* at present, is the establishment of general funds, which alone can do justice to the creditors of the United States (of whom the army forms the most meritorious class), restore public credit, and supply the future wants of government. This is the object of all men of sense. In this, the influence of the army, properly directed, may co-operate.

The intimations I have thrown out, will suffice to give your Excellency a proper conception of my sentiments. You will judge of their reasonableness or fallacy; but I persuade myself you will do justice to my motives.

I have the honor to be,
With great respect,
Your Excellency's
Most obedient servant,
ALEX. HAMILTON.

General Knox has the confidence of the army, and is a man of sense. I think he may be safely made use of. Situated as I am, your Excellency will feel the confidential nature of these observations.

His Excellency General Washington.

DUANE TO HAMILTON.

NEWBURGH, 17th February, 1783.

DEAR SIR:

I am now on a visit from the General from Kingston, where the Legislature is convened. The British King's speech —— to

his Parliament, and his Secretary's letters to the Lord Mayor of London, which we had the pleasure of meeting here, afford us the fairest prospect of a speedy peace. I have but one anxiety remaining, and that respects a better establishment of our General Government on a basis that will secure the permanent union of the States, and a punctual payment of the public debts. I do not think our Legislature will be averse to a reasonable system. The Assembly have agreed to the requisitions of Congress, and to press for the arrears of taxes; and a joint committee of both Houses have taken measures to compel the immediate production of the accounts of all who have been intrusted with public money. This last step became so necessary, that I found no difficulty in getting it adopted. I would even hazard an attempt to introduce an intendant, if I had proper materials; but I am disappointed in not receiving the Maryland plan, which was promised me by Mr. Wright and Mr. Homsly. If possible, I still wish you would forward this act on this subject, and for the collection of taxes. The example of a State may be adopted, when any plan of my own might be rejected. There is such confusion in the present administration of our State finances, and the weight of our debts is so burthensome, that a remedy must be provided; and I apprehend the production of the public accounts, before alluded to, will furnish us with sufficient arguments to prove its necessity.

We are in want of the report, and of the evidence and arguments in support of our Territorial rights. If, as you proposed, you have taken the trouble to copy it, be so obliging as to transmit your copy. Should your leisure not have been sufficient for the undertaking, be pleased to get it transcribed and forwarded. It is a collection of great importance to the State, and if it should be lost, I do not know who would submit to the labor of a second effort.

General Schuyler was sent for a week ago to pay the last duties to your grandfather. He wrote me the tenth, that there was no hopes of his surviving many days, but I learn that he was still living four days ago, without the least prospect of recovery.

From your known punctuality, I take it for granted that you have written to me agreeably to your promise, and that your letters have miscarried. Any communication, while the Legislature are convened, would be peculiarly acceptable, and probably useful.

Be pleased to present my respectful compliments to Colonel Floyd, to Mrs. Hamilton, and Mr. and Mrs. Carter, and to the gentlemen of our family, etc.

With the utmost regard, I remain, dear Sir,

Your affectionate and most

Obedient humble servant,

JAS. DUANE.

Colonel Alexander Hamilton.

HAMILTON TO GOVERNOR CLINTON.

February, 24, 1783.

SIR:

In my letter of the fourteenth I informed your Excellency, that Congress were employed in devising a plan for carrying the eighth article of the Confederation into execution. This business is at length brought to a conclusion. I inclose, for the information of the Legislature, the proceedings upon it in different stages, by which they will see the part I have acted. But as I was ultimately left in a small minority, I think it my duty to explain the motives upon which my opposition to the general course of the House was founded.

I am of opinion, that the article of the Confederation itself was ill-judged. In the first place, I do not believe there is any general representative of the wealth of a nation, the criterion of its ability to pay taxes. There are only two that can be thought of, *land* and *numbers*.

The revenues of the United Provinces (general and particular) were computed, before the present war, to more than half as much as those of Great Britain. The extent of their terri-

tory is not one-fourth part as great; their population less than a third. The comparison is still more striking between those Provinces and the Swiss Cantons; in both of which, extent of territory and population are nearly the same; and yet the revenues of the former are five times as large as those of the latter; nor could any efforts of taxation bring them to any thing like a level. In both cases, the advantages for agriculture are superior in those countries which afford least revenue in proportion. I have selected these examples because they are most familiar; but whoever will extend the comparison between the nations of the world, will perceive that the position I have laid down is supported by universal experience.

The truth is, the ability of a country to pay taxes depends on infinite combinations of physical and moral causes, which can never be accommodated to any general rule; climate, soil, productions, advantages for navigation, government, genius of the people, progress of arts and industry, and an endless variety of circumstances. The diversities are sufficiently great, in these States, to make an infinite difference in their relative wealth; the proportion of which can never be found by any common measure whatever.

The only possible way, then, of making them contribute to the general expense, in an equal proportion to their means, is by general taxes imposed under Continental authority.

In this mode, there would, no doubt, be inequalities, and, for a considerable time, material ones; but experience, and the constant operation of a general interest, which, by the very collision of particular interests, must, in the main, prevail in a Continental deliberative, would at length correct those inequalities, and balance one tax that should bear hard upon one State, by another that should have proportional weight in others. This idea, however, was not, at the period of framing the Confederation, and is not yet, agreeable to the spirit of the time. To futurity we must leave the discovery, how far this spirit is wise or foolish. One thing only is now certain; that Congress, having the discretionary power of determining the quantum of money to be paid into the general treasury towards defraying the com-

mon expenses, have, in effect, the constitutional power of general taxation.

The restraints upon the exercise of this power, amount to perpetuating a rule for fixing the proportions, which must of necessity produce inequality, and, by refusing the Federal Government a power of specific taxation and of collection, without substituting any other adequate means of coercion, do, in fact, leave the compliance with Continental requisitions to the good will of the respective States. Inequality is inherent in the theory of the Confederation; and, in the practice, that inequality must increase in proportion to the honesty or dishonesty of the component parts. This vice will either, in its consequences, reform the Federal Constitution, or dissolve it.

If a general standard must be fixed, numbers were preferable to land. Modes might be devised to ascertain the former with tolerable precision; but I am persuaded the experiment will prove, that the value of all the land in each State cannot be ascertained with any thing like exactness. Both these measures have the common disadvantage of being no equal representative of the wealth of the people; but one is much more simple, definite, and certain than the other.

I have indulged myself in these remarks, to show that I have little expectation of success from any mode of carrying the article in question into execution upon equitable principles. I owe it, however, to myself, to declare, that my opposition did not arise from this source. The Confederation has pointed out this mode; and, though I would heartily join in a representation of the difficulties (of which every man of sense must be sensible on examination) that occur in the execution of the plan, to induce the States to consent to a change, yet, as this was not the disposition of a majority of Congress, I would have assented to any mode of attempting it which was not either obviously mischievous or impracticable.

The first plan proposed, as your Excellency will see, was an actual valuation of each State by itself. This was evidently making the interested party judge in his own cause. Those who have seen the operation of this principle between the counties in the

same State, and the districts in the same county, cannot doubt a moment that the valuations on this plan would have been altogether unequal and unjust. Without supposing more liberality in one State than another, the degree of care, judgment, and method, employed in the execution, would alone make extreme differences in the results.

This mode has, also, the further inconvenience of awakening all the jealousies of the several States against each other. Each would suspect that its neighbor had favored itself, whether the partiality appeared or not. It would be impossible to silence these distrusts, and to make the States sit down satisfied with the justice of each other. Every new requisition for money would be a new signal for discussion and clamor; and the seeds of disunion, already sown too thick, would not be a little multiplied.

To guard against these evils, the plan proposes a revision by Congress; but it is easy to be seen that such a power could not be exercised. Should any States return defective valuations, it would be difficult to find sufficient evidence to determine them such. To alter would not be admissible; for Congress could have no data which could be presumed equivalent to those which must have governed the judgment of commissioners under oath, or an actual view of the premises. To do either this, or to reject, would be an impeachment of the honor of the States, which it is not probable there would be decision enough to hazard; and which, if done, could not fail to excite serious disgusts. There is a wide difference between a single State exercising such a power over its own counties, and a Confederated Government exercising it over sovereign States which compose the Confederacy. It might also happen, that too many States would be interested in the defective valuations, to leave a sufficient number willing, either to alter or to reject.

These considerations prevailed to prevent the plan being adopted by a majority.

The last plan may be less mischievous than the first; but it appears to me altogether ineffectual. The mere quantity of land granted and surveyed, with the general species of buildings upon them, can certainly be no criteria to determine their value. The

plan does not even distinguish the improved from the unimproved land; the qualities of soil, or degrees of improvement: the quantities of the houses and other buildings, are entirely omitted. These, it seems, are to be judged of by the commissioners to be appointed by each State. But I am unable to conceive, how any commissioner can form the least estimate of these circumstances with respect even to his own State, much less with respect to other States, which would be necessary to establish a just relative value. If even there was a distinction of improved from unimproved land, by supposing an intrinsic value in the land, and adopting general rates, something nearer the truth might be attained; but it must now be all conjecture and uncertainty.

The numbers of inhabitants, distinguishing white from black, are called for. This is not only totally foreign to the Confederation, but can answer no reasonable purpose. It has been said, that the proportion of numbers may guide and correct the estimates. An assertion, purely verbal, *has no meaning.* A judgment must first be formed of the value of the lands upon some principles. If this should be altered by the proportion of numbers, it is plain numbers would be substituted to land.

Another objection to this plan is, that it lets in the particular interests of the States, to operate in the returns of the quantities of land, number of buildings, and number of inhabitants. But the principle of this objection applies less forcibly here than against the former plan.

Whoever will consider the plain import of the eighth article of the Confederation, must be convinced, that it intended an *actual* and *specific* valuation of land, buildings, and improvements, not a mere general estimate, according to the present plan. While we insist, therefore, upon adhering to the Confederation, we should do it in reality, not barely in appearance.

Many of those who voted for this scheme, had as bad an opinion of it as myself; but they were induced to accede to it, by a persuasion that some plan for the purpose was expected by the States; and that none better, in the present circumstances of the country, could be fallen upon.

A leading rule which I have laid down for the direction of

my conduct, is this: that while I would have a just deference for the expectations of the States, I would never consent to amuse them by attempts which must either fail in the execution, or be productive of evil. I would rather incur the negative inconveniences of delay than the positive mischiefs of injudicious expedients. A contrary conduct serves to destroy confidence in the government, the greatest misfortune that can befall a nation. There should, in my opinion, be a character of wisdom and efficiency in all the measures of the Federal Council, the opposite of a spirit of temporizing concession.

I would have sufficient reliance on the judgments of the several States, to hope that good reasons for not attempting a thing, would be more satisfactory to them than precipitate and fruitless attempts.

My idea is, that, taking it for granted the States will expect an experiment on the principle of the Confederation, the best plan will be to make it by commissioners appointed by Congress, and acting under their authority. Congress might, in the first instance, appoint three or more of the principal characters in each State for probity and abilities, with a power to nominate other commissioners under them, in each subdivision of the State. General principles might be laid down for the regulation of their conduct, by which uniformity in the manner of conducting the business would obtain. Sanctions of such solemnity might be prescribed, and such notoriety given to every part of the transaction, that the commissioners could neither be careless nor partial without a sacrifice of reputation.

To carry this plan, however, into effect, with sufficient care and accuracy, would be a work both of time and expense; and, unfortunately, we are so pressed to find money for calls of immediate necessity, that we could not, at present, undertake a measure which would require so large a sum.

To me it appears evident, that every part of a business which is of so important and universal concern, should be transacted on uniform principles, and under the direction of that *body* which has a common interest.

In general, I regard the present moment, probably the dawn

of peace, as peculiarly critical; and the measures which it shall produce, as of great importance to the future welfare of these States. I am, therefore, scrupulously cautious of assenting to plans which appear to me founded on false principles.

Your Excellency will observe, that the valuation of the lands is to be the standard for adjusting the accounts, for past supplies, between the United States and the particular States. This, if adhered to, without allowance for the circumstances of those States which have been more immediately the theatre of the war, will charge our State for the past, according to its *future ability*, when in an entire condition, if the valuation should be made after we regain possession of the parts of the State now in the power of the enemy.

I have heretofore introduced a motion for repeating the call, in a more earnest manner, upon the States, to vest Congress with a power of making equitable abatements, agreeably to the spirit of the Resolution of the twentieth of February last, which few of the States have complied with. This motion has been committed. I know not what will be its fate.

Notwithstanding the opposition I have given, now the matter has been decided in Congress, I hope the State will cheerfully comply with what is required. Unless each State is governed by this principle, there is an end of the Union. Every State will, no doubt, have a right, in this case, to accompany its compliance with such remarks as it may think proper.

I have the honor to be,
Your Excellency's most ob't servant,
A. HAMILTON.

P. S. After the plan was agreed upon, it was committed to be put into form; and, when reported, instead of commissioners, an alteration was carried for making the estimate by a Grand Committee.

February 27.

Mr. Morris has signified to Congress, his resolution to resign by the first of June, if adequate funds are not by that time pro-

vided. This will be a severe stroke to our affairs. No man, fit for the office, will be willing to supply his place, for the very reason he resigns.

'Tis happy for us we have reasons to expect a peace. I am sorry that, by different accounts, it appears not to have been concluded late in December.

To His Excellency Governor Clinton.

GOVERNOR CLINTON TO HAMILTON.

KINGSTON, February 24, 1783.

SIR:

I have been honored by your letter of the twelfth of January. You may remember, that in July last, I submitted to the consideration of our Legislature, certain Resolutions of the Assembly of New Hampshire, making overtures for an amicable settlement of a boundary line between the two States; which were read and committed: but as the session was short, and devoted principally to the particular business for which they were convened, no determination was had on the subject. I had some reason to expect a consideration of these Resolutions would have taken place at the present meeting. This induced me to defer answering your letter until I could inform you of the result. I cannot, however, discover any disposition to take up this business. It seems to be the prevailing opinion, that as Congress has engaged to make a final decision of the controversy respecting the district called the Grants, a partial compromise of the matter would be improper; as any measures for the purpose, might alienate the affections of our most zealous subjects in that quarter, and be attended with other dangerous consequences. Besides, doubts exist whether the Legislature have authority, by any act of theirs, to consent to such a dismemberment of the State as would probably be insisted upon, on a compromise with New Hampshire. I am, nevertheless, still persuaded, should Congress

determine the summit of the mountains to be the boundary between the two States, this State (whatever our sentiments might be of the equity of the decision) would, for the sake of peace, submit to it: and there cannot be a doubt, but that New Hampshire would be perfectly satisfied with the jurisdiction of so extensive and valuable a territory. I take it for granted, that, whatever may be the decision, equitable measures will be adopted for securing the property of individuals.

I congratulate you, most sincerely, on the promising prospects of peace. I pray nothing may prevent the desirable event soon taking place. Our friends from the city, and Long Island, anxiously wait for the moment in which they may return to their homes. The expectations of all are so much raised as to obstruct public business not a little. Please to offer my best respects to Mrs. Hamilton, and believe me,

With great respect and esteem,
Sir, your most obedient servant,
GEO. CLINTON.

P. S. It is with great concern I mention, that since writing the above, I am informed of the death of your relation, Colonel John Van Rensselaer. He departed this life on Friday last. General Schuyler, who was sent for when his recovery was despaired of, is to set out from Albany on his return to this place on Wednesday next.

G. C.

To Alexander Hamilton, Esq.

WASHINGTON TO HAMILTON.

NEWBURGH, March 4, 1783.

DEAR SIR:

I have received your favor of February, and thank you for the information and observations it has conveyed to me. I shall always think myself obliged by a free communication of senti-

ments, and have often thought (but suppose I thought wrong, as it did not accord with the practice of Congress), that the public interest might be benefited, if the Commander-in-Chief of the army was let more into the political and pecuniary state of our affairs than he is. Enterprises, and the adoption of military and other arrangements that might be exceedingly proper in some circumstances, would be altogether improper in others. It follows, then, by fair deduction, that where there is a want of information, there must be chance-medley; and a man may be upon the brink of a precipice before he is aware of his danger, when a little foreknowledge might enable him to avoid it. But this by the by.

The hint contained in your letter, and the knowledge I have derived from the public gazettes, respecting the non-payment of taxes, contain all the information I have received of the danger that stares us in the face on account of our funds; and so far was I from conceiving that our finances were in so deplorable a state, *at this time*, that I had imbibed ideas from some source or other, that, with the prospect of a loan from Holland, we should be able to rub along.

To you, who have seen the danger to which the army has been exposed to a political dissolution for want of subsistence, and the unhappy spirit of licentiousness which it imbibed by becoming, in one or two instances, its own proveditors, no observations are necessary to evince the fatal tendency of such a measure; but I shall give it as my opinion, that it would at this day be productive of civil commotions and end in blood. Unhappy situation this! God forbid we should be involved in it.

The predicament in which I stand, as citizen and soldier, is as critical and delicate as can well be conceived. It has been the subject of many contemplative hours. The sufferings of a complaining army on one hand, and the inability of Congress, and tardiness of the States on the other, are the forebodings of evil, and may be productive of events which are more to be deprecated than prevented: but I am not without hope, if there is such a disposition shown as prudence and policy dictate, to do justice, your apprehensions, in case of peace, are greater than

there is cause for. In this, however, I may be mistaken, if those ideas which you have been informed are propagated in the army, should be extensive, the source of which may be easily traced; as the old leaven, *it is said*, for I have no proof of it, is again beginning to work, under the mask of the most perfect dissimulation and apparent cordiality.

Be these things as they may, I shall pursue the same steady line of conduct which has governed me hitherto; fully convinced, that the sensible and discerning part of the army cannot be unacquainted (although I never took pains to inform them) of the services I have rendered it on more occasions than one. This, and pursuing the suggestions of your letter, which I am happy to find coincide with my own practice for several months past, and which was the means of directing the business of the army into the channel it now is, leave me under no *great* apprehension of its exceeding the bounds of reason and moderation; notwithstanding the prevailing sentiment in the army is, that the prospect of compensation for past services will terminate with the war.

The just claims of the army ought, and it is to be hoped will, have their weight with every sensible Legislature in the Union, if Congress point to their demands; show (if the case is so) the reasonableness of them; and the impracticability of complying without their aid. In any other point of view, it would, in my opinion, be impolitic to introduce the army on the tapis, lest it should excite jealousy and bring on its concomitants. The States cannot, surely, be so devoid of common sense, common honesty, and common policy, as to refuse their aid, on a full, clear, and candid representation of facts from Congress; more especially, if these should be enforced by members of their own body, who might demonstrate what the inevitable consequences of failure must lead to.

In my opinion it is a matter worthy of consideration, how far an adjournment of Congress for a few months is advisable. The delegates, in that case, if they are in unison themselves respecting the great defects of their Constitution, may represent them fully and boldly to their constituents. To me, who know nothing

of the business which is before Congress, nor of the arcanum, it appears that such a measure would tend to promote the public weal: for it is clearly my opinion, unless Congress have powers competent to all *general* purposes, that the distresses we have encountered, the expenses we have incurred, and the blood we have spilt, in the course of an eight years' war, will avail us nothing.

The contents of your letter is known only to myself; and your prudence will direct what should be done with this.

With great esteem and regard,
I am, dear Sir,
Your most obedient servant,
G. WASHINGTON.

To the Hon. Alexander Hamilton, Esq.

HAMILTON TO WASHINGTON.

PHILADELPHIA, March 5, 1783.

SIR:

I had the honor of writing to your Excellency lately on a very confidential subject, and shall be anxious to know, as soon as convenient, whether the letter got safe to hand.

The bearer, Shattuck, thinks he can point out means of apprehending Wells and Knowlton, the two persons whom your Excellency was authorized to have taken into custody. I have desired him to call upon you to disclose the plan.

I will not trouble your Excellency with any observation on the importance of getting hold of those persons.

The surmise that Mr. Arnold, a member of Congress, gave intelligence to them of the design to take them, makes it peculiarly important.

I have the honor to be,
Your Excellency's most ob't serv't,
A. HAMILTON.

To His Excellency General Washington.

WASHINGTON TO HAMILTON.

NEWBURGH, March 12, 1783.

DEAR SIR:

When I wrote to you last, we were in a state of tranquillity; but after the arrival of a certain gentleman, who shall be nameless at present, from Philadelphia, a storm very suddenly arose, with unfavorable prognostics; which, though diverted for a moment, is not yet blown over; nor is it in my power to point to the issue.

The papers which I send officially to Congress, will supersede the necessity of my remarking on the tendency of them. The notification and address, both, appeared at the same instant, on the day preceding the intended meeting. The first of these I got hold of the same afternoon; the other not till next morning.

There is something very mysterious in this business. It appears reports have been propagated in Philadelphia, that dangerous combinations were forming in the army; and this at a time when there was not a syllable of the kind in agitation in camp. It also appears, that upon the arrival in camp of the gentleman above alluded to, such sentiments as these were immediately circulated: That it was universally expected the army would not disband until they had obtained justice; that the public creditors looked up to them for redress of their own grievances; would afford them every aid, and even join them in the field, if necessary; that some members of Congress wished the measure might take effect, in order to compel the public, particularly the delinquent States, to do justice; with many other suggestions of a similar nature.

From this, and a variety of other considerations, it is firmly believed by *some*, the scheme was not only planned, but also digested and matured, in Philadelphia;* but my opinion shall

* The words, "By others, that it is the illegitimate offspring of a person in the army," which came in here, are obliterated in the original, but were restored by Washington in the *postscript*.

be suspended till I have better ground to found one on. The matter was managed with great art; for as soon as the minds of the officers were thought to be prepared for the transaction, the anonymous invitations and addresses to the officers were put in circulation through every State line in the army. I was obliged, therefore, in order to arrest on the spot, the feet that stood wavering on a tremendous precipice, to prevent the officers from being taken by surprise, while the passions were all inflamed, and to rescue them from plunging themselves into a gulf of civil horror from which there might be no receding, to issue the order of the eleventh.

This was done upon the principle that it is easier to divert from a wrong, and point to a right path, than it is to recall the hasty and fatal steps which have been already taken.

It is commonly supposed, if the officers had met agreeably to the anonymous summons, with their feelings all alive, resolutions might have been formed, the consequences of which may be more easily conceived than described. Now they will have leisure to view the matter more calmly, and will act more seriously. It is to be hoped they will be induced to adopt more rational measures, and wait a while longer a settlement of their accounts, the postponing of which appears to be the most plausible, and almost the only article of which designing men can make an improper use, by insinuating (which they really do) that it is done with design that peace may take place, and prevent any adjustment of accounts; which, say they, would inevitably be the case, if the war was to cease to-morrow: or, supposing the best, you would have to dance attendance at public offices, at great distances, perhaps, and equally great expenses, to obtain a settlement, which would be highly injurious, nay, ruinous to you. This is their language.

Let me beseech you, therefore, my good sir, to urge this matter earnestly, and without further delay. The situation of these gentlemen, I do verily believe, is distressing beyond description. It is affirmed to me, that a large part of them have no better prospect before them than a jail, if they are turned loose without liquidation of accounts, and an assurance of that justice to

which they are so worthily entitled. To prevail on the delegates of those States, through whose means these difficulties occur, it may, in my opinion, with propriety be suggested to them, if any disastrous consequences should follow, by reason of their delinquency, that they must be answerable to God and their Country for the ineffable horrors which may be occasioned thereby.

I am, dear Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

G. WASHINGTON.

P. S. I have received your letter of the fifth, and have put that matter in train which was mentioned in it.

G. W.

I am this instant informed, that a second address to the officers, distinguished No. 2, is thrown into circulation. The contents evidently prove, that the author is in, or near, camp; and that the following words, erased in the second page of this letter, ought not to have met with this treatment, viz.—"By others, that it is the illegitimate offspring of a person in the army."

HAMILTON TO WASHINGTON.

PHILADELPHIA, March 17, 1783.

SIR:

I am duly honored with your Excellency's letters of the fourth and twelfth instant. It is much to be regretted, though not to be wondered at, that steps of so inflammatory a tendency have been taken in the army. Your Excellency has, in my opinion, acted wisely. The best way is, ever, not to attempt to stem a torrent, but to divert it.

I am happy to find you coincide in opinion with me on the conduct proper to be observed by yourself. I am persuaded, more and more, it is that which is most consistent with your own reputation and the public safety.

Our affairs wear a most serious aspect, as well foreign as domestic. Before this gets to hand, your Excellency will probably have seen the provisional articles between Great Britain and these States. It might, at first appearance, be concluded, that these will be the prelude to a general peace; but there are strong reasons to doubt the truth of such a conclusion. Obstacles may arise from different quarters; from the demands of Spain and Holland; from the hope, in France, of greater acquisitions in the East; and, perhaps, still more probably, from the insincerity and duplicity of Lord Shelburne, whose politics, founded in the peculiarity of his situation, as well as in the character of the man, may well be suspected of insidiousness. I am really apprehensive, if peace does not take place, that the negotiations will tend to sow distrust among the allies, and weaken the force of the common league. We have, I fear, men among us, and men in trust, who have a hankering after British connection. We have others whose confidence in France savors of credulity. The intrigues of the former, and the incautiousness of the latter, may be both, though in different degrees, injurious to the American interests, and make it difficult for prudent men to steer a proper course.

There are delicate circumstances, with respect to the late foreign transactions, which I am not at liberty to reveal; but which, joined to our internal weaknesses, disorders, follies, and prejudices, make this country stand upon precarious ground.

Some use, perhaps, may be made of these ideas, to induce moderation in the army. An opinion that their country does not stand upon a secure footing, will operate upon the patriotism of the officers against hazarding any domestic commotions.

When I make these observations, I cannot forbear adding, that if no excesses take place, I shall not be sorry that ill-humors have appeared. I shall not regret importunity, if temperate, from the army.

There are good intentions in the majority of Congress, but there is not sufficient wisdom or decision. There are dangerous prejudices, in the particular States, opposed to those measures which alone can give stability and prosperity to the Union.

There is a fatal opposition to Continental views. Necessity alone can work a reform. But how produce that necessity, how apply it, and how keep it within salutary bounds? I fear we have been contending for a shadow.

The affair of accounts I considered as having been put on a satisfactory footing. The particular States have been required to settle till the first of August, '80; and the Superintendent of Finance has been directed to take measures for settling since that period. I shall immediately see him on the subject.

We have had eight States and a half in favor of a commutation of the half pay for an average of ten years' purchase; that is, five years' full pay instead of half pay for life, which, on a calculation of annuities, is nearly an equivalent. I hope this will now shortly take place.

We have made considerable progress in a plan to be recommended to the several States for funding all the public debts, including those of the army; which is certainly the only way to restore public credit, and enable us to continue the war by borrowing abroad, if it should be necessary, to continue it.

I omitted mentioning to your Excellency, that, from European intelligence, there is great reason to believe, at all events, peace or war, New-York will be evacuated in the spring. It will be a pity if any domestic disturbances should change the plans of the British Court.

I have the honor to be,
With the greatest respect,
Your Excellency's most ob't serv't,
A. HAMILTON.

P. S. Your Excellency mentions, that it has been surmised, the plan in agitation was formed in Philadelphia; that combinations have been talked of between the public creditors and the army; and that members of Congress had encouraged the idea. This is partly true. I have myself urged, in Congress, the propriety of uniting the influence of the public creditors, and the army, as a part of them, to prevail upon the States to enter into their views. I have expressed the same sentiments out of doors.

Several other members of Congress have done the same. The meaning, however, of all this, was simply, that Congress should adopt such a plan as would embrace the relief of all the public creditors, including the army; in order that the personal influence of some, the connections of others, and a sense of justice to the army, as well as the apprehension of ill consequences, might form a mass of influence, in each State, in favor of the measures of Congress. In this view, as I mentioned to your Excellency in a former letter, I thought the discontents of the army might be turned to a good account. I am still of opinion, that their earnest but respectful applications for redress will have a good effect. As to any combination of *force*, it would only be productive of the horrors of a civil war, might end in the ruin of the country, and would certainly end in the ruin of the army.

A. H.

To His Excellency General Washington.

HAMILTON TO WASHINGTON.

PHILADELPHIA, March 24, 1783.

SIR:

Your Excellency will, before this reaches you, have received a letter from the Marquis De La Fayette, informing you, that the preliminaries of peace between all the belligerent powers have been concluded. I congratulate your Excellency on this happy conclusion of your labors. It now only remains to make solid establishments within, to perpetuate our Union, to prevent our being a ball in the hands of European powers, banded against each other at their pleasure; in fine, to make our independence truly a blessing. This, it is to be lamented, will be an arduous work; for, to borrow a figure from mechanics, the centrifugal is much stronger than the centripetal force in these States; the seeds of disunion much more numerous than those of union.

I will add, that your Excellency's exertions are as essential

to accomplish this end, as they have been to establish independence. I will, upon a future occasion, open myself upon this subject.

Your conduct in the affair of the officers is highly pleasing here. The measures of the army are such as I could have wished them, and will add new lustre to their character, as well as strengthen the hands of Congress.

I am, with great truth and respect,
Your Excellency's
Most obedient servant,
A. HAMILTON.

To his Excellency General Washington.

HAMILTON TO WASHINGTON.

PHILADELPHIA, March 25, 1783.

SIR:

I wrote to your Excellency a day or two ago by express. Since that, a committee, appointed on the communications from you, have had a meeting, and find themselves embarrassed. They have requested me to communicate our embarrassments to you in confidence, and to ask your private opinion. The army, by their resolutions, express an expectation that Congress will not disband them previous to a settlement of accounts, and the establishment of funds. Congress may resolve upon the first, but the general opinion is, that they cannot constitutionally declare the second. They have no right, by the Confederation, to *demand* funds; they can only recommend: and to determine, that the army shall be continued in service till the States grant them, would be to determine, that the whole present army shall be a standing army during peace, unless the States comply with the requisition for funds. This, it is supposed, would excite the alarms and jealousies of the States, and increase, rather than lessen, the opposition to the funding scheme. It is also observed, that the longer the army is kept together, the more the payment of past dues is procrastinated; the abilities of the States being

exhausted for their immediate support, and a new debt every day incurred. It is further suggested, that there is danger in keeping the army together, in a state of inactivity, and that a separation of the several lines would facilitate the settlement of accounts, diminish present expense, and avoid the danger of union. It is added, that the officers of each line, being on the spot, might, by their own solicitations, and those of their friends, forward the adoption of funds in the different States.

A proposition will be transmitted to you by Colonel Bland, in the form of a resolution, to be adopted by Congress, framed upon the principles of the foregoing reasoning.

Another proposition is contained in the following resolution:

"That the Commander-in-Chief be informed, it is the intention of Congress to effect the settlement of the accounts of the respective lines previous to their reduction; and that Congress are doing, and will continue to do, every thing in their power towards procuring satisfactory securities for what shall be found due on such settlement."

The scope of this your Excellency will perceive without comment.

I am to request you will favor me with your sentiments on both the propositions; and, in general, with your ideas of what had best be done with reference to the expectation expressed by the officers; taking into view the situation of Congress. On one side, the army expect they will not be disbanded till accounts are settled and funds established. On the other hand, they have no constitutional power of doing any thing more than to recommend funds, and are persuaded that these will meet with mountains of prejudice in some of the States.

A considerable progress has been made in a plan for funding the public debts; and it is to be hoped it will ere long go forth to the States, with every argument that can give it success.

I have the honor to be,
With sincere respect,
Your Excellency's
Most obedient servant,
A. HAMILTON.

To his Excellency General Washington.

HAMILTON TO WASHINGTON.

PHILADELPHIA, March 25, 1783.

SIR:

The inclosed I write more in a public than in a private capacity. Here I write as a citizen, zealous for the true happiness of this country; as a soldier who feels what is due to an army which has suffered every thing, and done much for the safety of America.

I sincerely wish *ingratitude* was not so natural to the human heart as it is. I sincerely wish there were no seeds of it in those who direct the councils of the United States. But while I urge the army to moderation, and advise your Excellency to take the direction of their discontents, and endeavor to confine them within the bounds of duty, I cannot, as an honest man, conceal from you, that I am afraid their distrusts have too much foundation. Republican jealousy has in it a principle of hostility to an army, whatever be their merits, whatever be their claims to the gratitude of the community. It acknowledges their services with unwillingness, and rewards them with reluctance. I see this temper, though smothered with great care, involuntarily breaking out upon too many occasions. I often feel a mortification, which it would be impolitic to express, that sets my passions at variance with my reason. Too many, I perceive, if they could do it with safety or color, would be glad to elude the just pretensions of the army. I hope this is not the prevailing disposition.

But supposing the country ungrateful, what can the army do? It must submit to its hard fate. To seek redress by its arms would end in its ruin. The army would moulder by its own weight, and for want of the means of keeping together: the soldiery would abandon their officers: there would be no chance of success, without having recourse to means that would reverse our revolution. I make these observations, not that I imagine your Excellency can want motives to continue your influence in the path of moderation; but merely to show why I cannot, myself, enter into the views of coercion which some gentlemen entertain.

For I confess, could force avail, I should almost wish to see it employed. I have an indifferent opinion of the honesty of this country, and ill forebodings as to its future system.

Your Excellency will perceive I have written with sensations of chagrin, and will make allowance for coloring: but the general picture is too true. God send us all more wisdom.

I am, with very sincere respect,
Your Excellency's
Obedient servant,
A. HAMILTON.

To his Excellency General Washington.

WASHINGTON TO HAMILTON.

NEWBURGH, March 31, 1783.

DEAR SIR:

I have duly received your favors of the seventeenth and twenty-fourth ultimo. I rejoice, most exceedingly, that there is an end to our warfare; and that such a field is opening to our view, as will, with wisdom to direct the cultivation of it, make us a great, a respectable, and happy people: but it must be improved by other means than State politics and unreasonable jealousies and prejudices; or (it requires not the second sight to see that) we shall be instruments in the hands of our enemies, and those European powers who may be jealous of our greatness in union, to dissolve the Confederation. But to attain this, although the way seems extremely plain, is not so easy.

My wish to see the union of these States established upon liberal and permanent principles, and inclination to contribute my mite in pointing out the defects of the present constitution, are equally great. All my private letters have teemed with these sentiments; and whenever this topic has been the subject of conversation, I have endeavored to diffuse and enforce them; but how far any further essay, by me, might be productive of the

wished for end, or appear to arrogate more than belongs to me, depends so much upon popular opinion, and the temper and disposition of people, that it is not easy to decide. I shall be obliged to you, however, for the thoughts which you have promised me on this subject, and as soon as you can make it convenient.

No man in the United States, is, or can be, more deeply impressed with the necessity of a reform in our present Confederation, than myself; no man, perhaps, has felt the bad effects of it more sensibly: for, to the defects thereof, and want of powers in Congress, may justly be ascribed the prolongation of the war, and, consequently, the expenses occasioned by it. More than half the perplexities I have experienced in the course of my command, and almost the whole of the difficulties and distress of the army, have their origin here: but still, the prejudices of some, the designs of others, and the mere machinery of the majority, make address and management necessary, to give weight to opinions which are to combat the doctrines of these different classes of men, in the field of politics.

I would have been more full on this subject, but the bearer (in the clothing department) is waiting. I wish you may understand what I have written.

I am, dear Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

G. WASHINGTON.

To the Hon. Alexander Hamilton.

WASHINGTON TO HAMILTON.

NEWBURGH, April 4, 1783.

DEAR SIR:

The same post which gave me your two letters of the twenty-fifth of March, handed me one from Colonel Bland on the same point.

Observing that both have been written at the desire of a com-

mittee of which you are both members, I have made a very full reply to their subject in my letter which is addressed to Colonel Bland; and, supposing it unnecessary to enter into a complete detail to both, I must beg leave to refer you to Colonel Bland's (a sight of which I have desired him to give you), for a full explanation of my ideas and sentiments.

I read your private letter of the twenty-fifth with pain, and contemplated the picture it had drawn with astonishment and horror: but I will yet hope for the best. The idea of redress, by force, is too chimerical to have had a place in the imagination of any serious mind in this army; but there is no telling what unhappy disturbances may result from distress, and distrust of justice: and as the fears and jealousies of the army are alive, I hope no resolution will be come to, for disbanding or separating the lines, till the accounts are liquidated. You may rely upon it, sir, that unhappy consequences would follow the attempt. The suspicions of the officers are afloat, notwithstanding the resolutions which have passed on both sides. Any act, therefore, which can be construed into an attempt to separate them before the accounts are settled, will convey the most unfavorable ideas of the rectitude of Congress: whether well or ill founded, matters not; the consequences will be the same.

I will now, in strict confidence, mention a matter which may be useful for you to be informed of. It is, that some men (and leading ones, too) in this army, are beginning to entertain suspicions that Congress, or some members of it, regardless of the past sufferings and present distress, maugre the justice which is due to them, and the returns which a grateful people should make to men who certainly have contributed, more than any other class, to the establishment of Independency, are to be made use of as mere puppets to establish Continental funds; and that, rather than not succeed in this measure, or weaken their ground, they would make a sacrifice of the army and all its interests.

I have two reasons for mentioning this matter to you: the one is, that the army (considering the irritable state it is in, its sufferings, and composition) is a dangerous instrument to play

with; the other, that every possible means, consistent with their own views (which certainly are moderate), should be essayed to get it disbanded without delay. I might add a third: it is, that the Financier is suspected to be at the bottom of this scheme. If sentiments of this sort should become general, their operation will be opposed to this plan, at the same time that it would increase the present discontents. Upon the whole, disband the army as soon as possible, but consult the wishes of it, which really are moderate in the mode, and perfectly compatible with the honor, dignity, and justice, which is due from the country to it.

I am, with great esteem and regard,
Dear Sir, your most obedient servant,
G. WASHINGTON.

To the Hon. Alexander Hamilton.

HAMILTON TO WASHINGTON.

April 11, 1783.

SIR:

I have received your Excellency's letters of the thirty-first of March, and fourth of April; the last to-day. The one to Colonel Bland, as member of the committee, has been read in committee confidentially, and gave great satisfaction. The idea of not attempting to separate the army before the settlement of accounts, corresponds with my proposition. That of endeavoring to let them have some pay, had also appeared to me indispensable. The expectations of the army, as represented by your Excellency, are moderation itself. To-morrow we confer with the Superintendent of Finance on the subject of money. There will be difficulty, but not, we hope, insurmountable.

I thank your Excellency for the hints you are so obliging as to give me in your private letter. I do not wonder at the suspicions that have been infused; nor should I be surprised to hear, that I have been pointed out as one of the persons concerned in

playing the game described. But facts must speak for themselves. The gentlemen who were here from the army, General McDougal, who is still here, will be able to give a true account of those who have supported the just claims of the army, and of those who have endeavored to elude them.

There are two classes of men, sir, in Congress, of very different views: one attached to State, the other to Continental politics. The last have been strenuous advocates for funding the public debt upon solid securities; the former have given every opposition in their power; and have only been dragged into the measures which are now near being adopted, by the clamors of the army and other public creditors.

The advocates for Continental funds, have blended the interests of the army with other creditors, from a conviction, that no funds, for partial purposes, will go through those States to whose citizens the United States are largely indebted; or if they should be carried through, from impressions of the moment, would have the necessary stability: for the influence of those unprovided for, would always militate against a provision for others, in exclusion of them. It is in vain to tell men, who have parted with a large part of their property on the public faith, that the services of the army are entitled to a preference: they would reason from their interest and their feelings: these would tell them, that they had as great a title as any other class of the community to public justice; and that while this was denied to them, it would be unreasonable to make them bear their part of a burthen for the benefit of others. This is the way they would reason; and as their influence in some of the States was considerable, they would have been able to prevent any partial provision.

But the question was not merely how to do justice to the creditors, but how to restore public credit. Taxation, in this country, it was found, would not supply a sixth part of the public necessities. The loans in Europe were far short of the balance, and the prospect every day diminishing; the Court of France telling us, in plain terms, she could not even do as much as she had done; individuals in Holland, and every where else,

refusing to part with their money, on the precarious tenure of the mere faith of this country, without any pledge for the payment either of principal or interest.

In this situation what was to be done? It was essential to our cause, that vigorous efforts should be made to restore public credit; it was necessary to combine all the motives to this end, that could operate upon different descriptions of persons in the different States: the necessities and discontents of the army presented themselves as a powerful engine.

But, sir, these gentlemen would be puzzled to support their insinuations by a single fact. It was, indeed, proposed to appropriate the intended impost on trade to the army debt; and, what was extraordinary, by gentlemen who had expressed their dislike to the principle of the fund. I acknowledge I was one that opposed this, for the reasons already assigned, and for these additional ones: *That* was the fund on which we most counted; to obtain further loans in Europe, it was necessary we should have a fund sufficient to pay the interest of what had been borrowed, and what was to be borrowed. The truth was, these people, in this instance, wanted to play off the army against the funding system.

As to Mr. Morris, I will give your Excellency a true explanation of his conduct. He had been for some time pressing Congress to endeavor to obtain funds, and had found a great backwardness in the business. He found the taxes unproductive in the different States; he found the loans, in Europe, making a very slow progress; he found himself pressed on all hands for supplies; he found himself, in short, reduced to this alternative, either of making engagements which he could not fulfil, or declaring his resignation in case funds were not established by a given time. Had he followed the first course, the bubble must soon have burst; he must have sacrificed his credit and his character: and public credit, already in a ruinous condition, would have lost its last support.

He wisely judged it better to resign: this might increase the embarrassments of the moment; but the necessity of the case, it was to be hoped, would produce the proper measures; and he

might then resume the direction of the machine with advantage and success.

He also had some hope that his resignation would prove a stimulus to Congress.

He was, however, ill advised in the publication of his letters of resignation. This was an imprudent step, and has given a handle to his personal enemies, who, by playing upon the passions of others, have drawn some well-meaning men into the cry against him. But Mr. Morris certainly deserves a great deal from his country. I believe no man in this country, but himself, could have kept the money machine agoing during the period he has been in office. From every thing that appears, his administration has been upright as well as able.

The truth is, the old leaven of Deane and Lee, is, at this day, working against Mr. Morris. He happened, in that dispute, to have been on the side of Deane; and certain men can never forgive him. A man whom I once esteemed, and whom I will rather suppose *duped* than wicked, is the second actor in this business.

The matter, with respect to the army, which has occasioned most altercation in Congress, and most dissatisfaction in the army, has been the half pay. The opinions on this head have been two: one party was for referring the several lines to their States, to make such commutation as they should think proper; the other, for making the commutation by Congress, and funding it on Continental security. I was of this last opinion; and so were all those who will be represented as having made use of the army as puppets. Our principal reasons were, *Firstly:* By referring the lines to their respective States, those which were opposed to the half pay, would have taken advantage of the officers' necessities, to make the commutation far short of an equivalent. *Secondly:* The inequality which would have arisen in the different States when the officers came to compare (as has happened in other cases), would have been a new source of discontent. *Thirdly:* Such a reference was a continuance of the old wretched State system, by which the ties between Congress and the army have been nearly dissolved; by which the re-

sources of the States have been diverted from the common treasury, and wasted; a system which your Excellency has often justly reprobated.

I have gone into these details, to give you a just idea of the parties in Congress. I assure you, upon my honor, sir, I have given you a candid state of facts, to the best of my judgment. The men against whom the suspicions you mention must be directed, are, in general, the most sensible, the most liberal, the most independent, and the most respectable characters in our body, as well as the most unequivocal friends to the army. In a word, they are the men who think continentally.

I have the honor to be,
With sincere respect and esteem,
Your Excellency's
Most obedient servant,
A. HAMILTON.

P. S. I am chairman of a committee for peace arrangements. We shall ask your Excellency's opinion at large, on a proper military peace establishment. I will just hint to your Excellency, that our prejudices will make us wish to keep up as few troops as possible.

We this moment learn, an officer is arrived from Sir Guy Carleton with dispatches; probably official accounts of peace.

A. H.

To His Excellency General Washington.

HAMILTON TO WASHINGTON.

PHILADELPHIA, April 15, 1788.

SIR:

There are two resolutions passed relative to the restoration of the British prisoners, and to making arrangements for the surrender of the posts in the possession of the British troops; the first of which is to be transacted by you in conjunction with the

Secretary at War; the latter by yourself alone. I will explain to you some doubts which have arisen in Congress, with regard to the true construction of the provisional treaty; which may be of use to you in transacting the buiness above-mentioned.

The sixth article declares, that there shall be no future confiscations, etc., after the *ratification of the Treaty in America;* and the seventh article makes the surrender of prisoners, evacuation of posts, cessation of hostilities, etc., to depend on that event, to wit, *the ratification of the treaty in America.*

Now the doubt is, whether *the treaty* means the provisional treaty *already concluded*, or the *definitive* treaty *to be concluded.* The last construction is most agreeable to the letter of the provisional articles; the former, most agreeable to the usual practice of nations: for hostilities commonly cease on the ratification of the preliminary treaty.

There is a great diversity of opinion in Congress. It will be, in my opinion, advisable, at the same time that we do not communicate our doubts to the British, to extract their sense of the matter from them.

This may be done by asking them, at what periods they are willing to stipulate the surrender of posts; at the same time that they are asked, in what manner it will be the most convenient to them to receive the prisoners.

If they postpone the evacuation of the different posts to the definitive treaty, we shall then be justified in doing the same with respect to prisoners. The question will then arise, Whether, on principles of humanity, economy, and liberality, we ought not to restore the prisoners, at all events, without delay? Much may be said on both sides. I doubt the expedience of a total restoration of prisoners, till they are willing to fix the epochs at which they will take leave of us. It will add considerably to their strength; and accidents, though improbable, may happen.

I confess, however, I am not clear in my opinion.

I have the honor to be,

Your Excellency's

Most obedient servant,

A. HAMILTON.

P. S. The provisional or preliminary treaty, is ratified by us—for the greater caution.

A. H.

To His Excellency General Washington.

WASHINGTON TO HAMILTON.

NEWBURGH, April 16, 1783.

DEAR SIR:

My last letter to you was written in a hurry, when I was fatigued by the more public, yet confidential, letter, which (with several others) accompanied it. Possibly, I did not, on that occasion, express myself (in what I intended as a hint) with so much perspicuity as I ought: possibly, too, what I then dropped, might have conveyed more than I intended; for I do not, at this time, recollect the force of my expression.

My meaning, however, was only to inform, that there were different sentiments in the army, as well as in Congress, respecting Continental and State funds: some wishing to be thrown upon their respective States, rather than the Continent at large, for payment; and that, if an idea should prevail, generally, that Congress, or part of its members, or ministers, bent upon the latter, should *delay* doing them justice, or *hazard* it in pursuit of their favorite object; it might create such divisions in the army, as would weaken, rather than strengthen, the hands of those who were disposed to support Continental measures; and might *tend* to defeat the end they themselves had in view by endeavoring to involve the army.

For these reasons I said, or meant to say, the army was a dangerous engine to work with, as it might be made to cut both ways; and, considering the sufferings of it, would, more than probably, throw its weight into that scale which seemed most likely to preponderate towards its immediate relief, without looking forward (under the pressure of present wants) to future consequences with the eyes of politicians. In this light, also,

I meant to apply my observations to Mr. Morris, to whom, or rather to Mr. G—— M——, is ascribed, in a great degree, the groundwork of the superstructure which was intended to be raised in the army by the anonymous addresses.

That no man can be more opposed to State funds and local prejudices than myself, the whole tenor of my conduct has been one continual evidence of. No man, perhaps, has had better opportunities to *see*, and to *feel*, the pernicious tendency of the latter than I have; and I endeavor (I hope not altogether ineffectually) to inculcate them upon the officers of the army, upon all proper occasions: but their feelings are to be attended to and soothed; and they assured, that if Continental funds cannot be established, they will be recommended to their respective States for payment. Justice must be done them.

I should do injustice to reports, and what I believe to be the opinion of the army, were I not to inform you, that they consider you as a friend, zealous to serve them, and one who has espoused their interests in Congress, upon every proper occasion. It is to be wished, as I observed in my letter to Colonel Bland, that Congress would send a committee to the army with plenipotentiary powers. The matters requested of me, in your letter of the , as chairman of a committee, and many other things, might then be brought to a close, with more despatch, and in a happier manner, than it is likely they will be by an intercourse of letters at the distance of one hundred and fifty miles: which takes *our* Expresses, a week, *at least*, to go and come. At this moment, being without any instructions from Congress, I am under great embarrassment with respect to the soldiers for the war; and shall be obliged, more than probably, from the necessity of the case, to exercise my own judgment without waiting for orders, as to the discharge of them. If I should adopt measures which events may approve, all will be well. If otherwise, Why and by what authority did you do so?

How far a *strong* recommendation from Congress, to observe *all* the Articles of Peace, as well as the , may imply a suspicion of good faith in the people of this country, I pretend not to judge: but I am much mistaken, if something of the kind

will not be found wanting; as I already perceive a disposition to carp at, and to elude, such parts of the treaty as affect their different interests; although you do not find a man, who, when pushed, will not acknowledge, that, upon the *whole*, it is a more advantageous Peace than we could possibly have expected.

I am, dear Sir,

With great esteem and regard,

Your most obedient servant,

G. WASHINGTON.

To the Hon. Alexander Hamilton.

WASHINGTON TO HAMILTON.

NEWBURGH, April 22, 1783.

DEAR SIR:

I did not receive your letter of the fifteenth, till after my return from Ringwood, where I had a meeting with the Secretary at War, for the purpose of making arrangements for the release of our prisoners, agreeably to the resolve of Congress of the fifteenth instant.

Finding a diversity of opinion respecting the treaty, and the line of conduct we ought to observe with the prisoners, I requested, in precise terms, to know from General Lincoln (before I entered on the business), whether we were to exercise our own judgment with respect to the *time*, as well as the *mode*, of releasing them; or were to be confined to the latter: being informed that we had no option in the first, Congress wishing to be eased of the expense as soon as possible, I acted *solely* on that ground.

At the same time, I scruple not to confess to you, that if this measure was not dictated by necessity, it is, in my opinion, an impolitic one; as we place ourselves in the power of the British, before the treaty is definitive. The manner in which Peace was first announced, and the subsequent declarations of it, have led the country and army into a belief, that it was final. The ratification of the preliminary articles, on the third of February, so

far confirmed this, that one consequence resulting from it, is, the soldiers for the war, conceive the term of their services has actually expired; and I believe it is not in the power of Congress, or their officers, to hold them much, if any, longer; for we are obliged, at this moment, to increase our guards, to prevent rioting, and the insults which the officers meet with, in attempting to hold them to their duty. The proportion of these men, amount to seven-elevenths of this army: these we shall lose at the moment the British army will receive, by their prisoners, an augmentation of five or six thousand men.

It is not for me to investigate the causes which induced this measure; nor the policy of those letters (from authority) which gave the *ton* to the present sentiment; but since they have been adopted, we ought, in my opinion, to put a good face upon matters; and, by a liberal conduct throughout, on our part (freed from appearances of distrust) try if we cannot excite similar dispositions on theirs. Indeed, circumstanced as things *now* are, I wish, most fervently, that all the troops which are not retained for a Peace Establishment, were to be discharged immediately, or such of them, at least, as do not incline to await the settlement of their accounts. If they continue here, their claims, I can plainly perceive, will increase; and our perplexities multiply. A petition is this moment handed to me, from the non-commissioned officers of the Connecticut line, soliciting half pay. It is well drawn, I am told, but I did not read it. I sent it back, without appearing to understand the contents, because it did not come through the channel of their officers. This may be followed by others: and I mention it, to show the necessity, the absolute necessity, of discharging the *Warsmen* as soon as possible.

I have taken much pains to support Mr. Morris's administration in the army; and, in proportion to its numbers, I believe he had not more friends any where: but if he will neither adopt the mode which has been suggested, point out any other, nor show cause why the first is either impracticable or impolitic (I have heard he objects to it), they will certainly attribute their disappointment to a lukewarmness in him, or some design incompa-

tible with their interests. And here, my dear Colonel Hamilton, let me assure you, that it would not be more difficult to still the raging billows in a tempestuous gale, than to convince the officers of this army, of the justice, or policy, of paying men, in civil offices, full wages, when *they* cannot obtain a sixtieth part of their dues.

I am not unapprised of the arguments which are made use of, upon this occasion, to discriminate the cases: but they really are futile; and may be summed up in this: that though both are contending for the same rights, and expect equal benefits, yet, both cannot submit to the same inconveniences to obtain them: otherwise, to adopt the language of simplicity and plainness, a ration of salt pork, with or without pease, as the case often is, would support the one as well as the other; and, in such a struggle as ours, would, in my opinion, be alike honorable in both.

My anxiety to get home, increases with the prospect of it. But when is it to happen? I have not heard that Congress have yet had under consideration, the lands, and other gratuities, which, at different periods of the war, have been promised to the army. Do not these things evince the necessity of a committee's repairing to camp, in order to arrange and adjust matters without spending time in a tedious exchange of letters? Unless something of this kind is adopted, business will be delayed, and expenses accumulated; or the army will break up in disorder, go home enraged, complaining of injustice, and committing enormities on the innocent inhabitants in every direction.

I write to you unreservedly. If, therefore, contrary to my apprehension, all these matters are in a proper train, and Mr. Morris has devised means to give the army three months' pay, you will, I am persuaded, excuse my precipitancy and solicitude, by ascribing it to an earnest wish to see the war happily and honorably terminated; to my anxious desire of enjoying some repose; and the necessity of my paying a little attention to my private concerns, which have suffered considerably in eight years' absence.

M'Henry, expressing, in a letter I have lately received from him, a wish to be appointed official Secretary to the Court of

Versailles, or London, I have, by this opportunity, written to Mr. Livingston, and Mr. Madison, speaking of him in warm terms; and wish him success with all my heart.

I am, dear Sir,

With great esteem and regard,

Your most obedient servant,

G. WASHINGTON.

Colonel Hamilton.

HAMILTON TO GOV. CLINTON.

PHILADELPHIA, May 14, 1788.

SIR:

The President of Congress will of course have transmitted to your Excellency, the plan lately adopted by Congress for funding the public debt. This plan was framed to accommodate it to the objections of some of the States; but this spirit of accommodation will only serve to render it less efficient, without making it more palatable. The opposition of the State of Rhode Island, for instance, is chiefly founded upon these two considerations: the merchants are opposed to any revenue from trade; and the State, depending almost wholly on commerce, wants to have credit for the amount of the duties.

Persuaded that the plan now proposed will have little more chance of success than a better one; and that, if agreed to by all the States, it will, in a great measure, fail in the execution, it received my negative. My principal objections were,

Firstly: That it does not designate the funds (except the impost) on which the whole interest is to arise; and by which (selecting the capital articles of visible property) the collection would have been easy, the funds productive, and necessarily increasing with the increase of the country.

Secondly: That the duration of the funds is not coextensive with the debt, but limited to twenty-five years; though there is

a moral certainty, that, in that period, the principal will not, by the present provision, be fairly extinguished.

Thirdly: That the nomination and appointment of the collectors of the revenue are to reside in each State, instead of, at least the nomination, being in the United States; the consequence of which will be, that those States which have little interest in the funds, by having a small share of the public debt due to their own citizens, will take care to appoint such persons as are least likely to collect the revenue.

The evils resulting from these defects, will be, that in many instances the objects of the revenues will be improperly chosen, and will consist of a multitude of little articles, which will, on experiment, prove insufficient; that for want of a vigorous collection in each State, the revenue will be unproductive in many, and will fall chiefly upon those States which are governed by most liberal principles; that for want of an adequate security, the evidences of the public debt, will not be transferable for any thing like their value; that this not admitting an incorporation of the creditors in the nature of Banks, will deprive the public of the benefit of an increased circulation, and of course will disable the people from paying the taxes for want of a sufficient medium.

I shall be happy to be mistaken in my apprehensions; but the experiment must determine.

I hope our State will consent to the plan proposed; because it is her interest, at all events, to promote the payment of the public debt on Continental funds (independent of the general considerations of unión and propriety).

I am much mistaken if the debts due from the United States to the citizens of the State of New-York, do not considerably exceed its proportion of the necessary funds: of course it has an immediate interest that there should be a Continental provision for them. But there are superior motives that ought to operate in every State; the obligations of national faith, honor, and reputation.

Individuals have been already too long sacrificed to public convenience. It will be shocking, and indeed an eternal reproach to this country, if we begin the peaceable enjoyment of

our independence by a violation of all the principles of honesty and true policy.

It is worthy of remark, that at least four-fifths of the domestic debt, are due to the citizens of the States (from Pennsylvania inclusively) northward.

I have the honor to be, Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

A. HAMILTON.

P. S. It is particularly interesting that the State should have a representation here. Not only many matters are depending which require a full representation in Congress (and there is now a thin one), but those matters are of a nature so particularly interesting to our State, that we ought not to be without a voice in them. I wish two other gentlemen of the delegation may appear as soon as possible; for it would be very injurious for me to remain much longer here. Having no future views in public life, I owe it to myself, without delay to enter upon the care of my private concerns in earnest.

A. H.

To His Excellency Governor Clinton.

HAMILTON TO GOVERNOR CLINTON.

PHILADELPHIA, June 1, 1783.

SIR:

In my last letter to your Excellency, I took occasion to mention, that it was of great importance to the State, at this time, to have a representation here, as points in which, by its present situation, it is particularly interested, are daily, and will be daily, agitated.

It is also of importance, at this moment, to the United States; (not only from general considerations, but) because we have a very thin representation in Congress, and are frequently unable to transact any of those matters which require nine States. I

wish your Excellency would urge a couple of gentlemen to come on, as it becomes highly inconvenient to me to remain here, and as I have staid the full time to be expected.

I observe, with great regret, the intemperate proceedings among the people in different parts of the State, in violation of a treaty, the faithful observance of which so deeply interests the United States.

Surely, the State of New-York, with its capital and its frontier posts (on which its important fur trade depends) in the hands of the British troops, ought to take care that nothing is done to furnish a pretext on the other side, even for delaying, much less for refusing, the execution of the treaty. We may imagine that the situation of Great Britain puts her under a necessity, at all events, of fulfilling her engagements, and cultivating the good will of this country.

This is, no doubt, her true policy; but when we feel that passion makes us depart from the dictates of reason; when we have seen that passion has had so much influence in the conduct of the British Councils, in the whole course of the war; when we recollect, that those who govern them, are men like ourselves, and alike subject to passions and resentments; when we reflect, also, that all the great men in England are not united in the liberal scheme of policy with respect to this country, and that in the anarchy which prevails, there is no knowing to whom the reins of government may be committed; when we recollect how little in a condition we are, to enforce a compliance with our claims; we ought, certainly, to be cautious in what manner we act, especially when we, in particular, have so much at stake; and should not openly provoke a breach of faith on the other side, by setting the example.

An important distinction is not sufficiently attended to. The fifth article is recommendatory; the sixth positive. There is no option, on the part of the particular States, as to any future confiscations, prosecutions, or injuries of any kind, to person, liberty, or property, on account of any thing done in the war. It is matter of discretion in the States, whether they will comply with the recommendations contained in the fifth article; but no

part of the sixth can be departed from by them, without a direct breach of public faith, and of the Confederation. The power of making treaties is exclusively lodged in Congress. That power includes whatever is essential to the termination of the war, and to the preservation of the general safety. Indemnity to individuals in similar cases, is a *usual* stipulation in treaties of peace, of which many precedents are to be produced.

Should it be said, that the associations of the people, without legal authority, do not amount to a breach of the public faith; the answer is, If the government does not repress them, and prevent their having effect, it is as much a breach, as a formal refusal to comply on its part. In the eye of a foreign nation, if our engagements are broken, it is of no moment whether it is for the want of good intention in the government, or for want of power to restrain its subjects.

Suppose a violence committed by an American vessel on the vessel of another nation, upon the high seas, and after complaint made there is no redress given: Is not this a hostility against the injured nation which will justify reprisals?

But if I am not misinformed, there are violations going on in form of law. I am told that indictments continue to be brought under the former confiscation laws: A palpable infraction, if true, of the sixth article of the treaty; to which an immediate stop ought, no doubt, to be put.

It has been said by some men, that the operation of this treaty is suspended till the definitive treaty: A plain subterfuge. Whatever is clearly expressed in the provisional or preliminary treaty, is as binding from the moment it is made, as the definitive treaty; which, in fact, only developes, explains and fixes, more precisely, what may have been too generally expressed in the former.

Suppose the British should now send away, not only the negroes, but all other property, and all the public records in their possession belonging to us, on the pretence above stated: should we not justly accuse them with breaking faith? Is this not already done in the case of the negroes who have been carried away, though founded upon a very different principle, a

doubtful construction of the treaty, not a denial of its immediate operation?

In fine, Is it our interest to advance this doctrine, and to countenance the position, that nothing is binding till the definitive treaty, when there are examples of *years* intervening between the preliminary and definitive treaties?

Sir Guy Carleton, in his correspondence, has appeared to consider the treaty as immediately obligatory: and it has been the policy which I have pursued, to promote the same idea.

I am not, indeed, apprehensive of a renewal of the war, for peace is necessary to Great Britain. I think it also most probable, her disposition to conciliate this country will outweigh the resentments which a breach of our engagements is calculated to inspire. But with a treaty which has exceeded the hopes of the most sanguine; which, in the articles of boundary and the fisheries, is even better than we asked; circumstanced, too, as this country is, with respect to the means of making war; I think it the height of imprudence to run any risk. Great Britain, without recommencing hostilities, may evade parts of the treaty. She may keep possession of the frontier posts; she may obstruct the free enjoyment of the fisheries; she may be indisposed to such extensive concessions, in matters of commerce, as it is our interest to aim at. In all this she would find no opposition from any foreign power: and we are not in a condition to oblige her to any thing. If we imagine that France, obviously embarrassed herself, in her finances, would renew the war to oblige Great Britain to the restoration of frontier posts; or to a compliance with the stipulations respecting the fisheries (especially after a manifest breach of the treaty on our part); we speculate much at random. Observations might be made on the last article, which would prove, that it is not the policy of France to support our interest there. Are we prepared, for the mere gratification of our resentments, to put those great national objects to the hazard; to leave our western frontier in a state of insecurity; to relinquish the fur trade; and to abridge our pretensions to the fisheries? Do we think national character so light a thing, as to be willing to sacrifice the public faith to individual animosity?

Let the case be fairly stated: Great Britain and America, two independent nations, at war. The former in possession of considerable posts and districts of territory, belonging to the latter; and also of the means of obstructing certain commercial advantages in which it is deeply interested.

But it is not uncommon, in treaties of peace, for the *uti possidetis* to take place. Great Britain, however, in the present instance, stipulates to restore all our posts and territories in her possession. She even adds an extent, not within our original claims, more than a compensation for a small part ceded in another quarter. She agrees to re-admit us to a participation in the fisheries. What equivalent do we give for this? Congress are to recommend the restoration of property to those who have adhered to her; and expressly engage, that no future injury shall be done them, in person, liberty, or property. This is the sole condition, on our part, where there is not an immediate reciprocity (the recovery of debts, and liberation of prisoners, being mutual; the former, indeed, only declaring what the rights of private faith, which all civilized nations hold sacred, would have declared without it), and stands as the single equivalent for all the restitutions and concessions to be made by Great Britain. Will it be honest in us to violate this condition, or will it be prudent to put it in competition with all the important matters to be performed on the other side?

Will foreign nations be willing to undertake any thing with us, or for us, when they find that the nature of our governments will allow no dependence to be placed upon our engagements? I have omitted saying any thing of the impolicy of inducing, by our severity, a great number of useful citizens, whose situations do not make them a proper object of resentment, to abandon the country, to form settlements that will hereafter become our rivals, animated with a hatred to us, which will descend to their posterity. Nothing, however, can be more unwise than to contribute, as we are doing, to people the shores and wilderness of Nova Scotia; a colony which, by its position, will become a competitor with us, among other things, in that branch of commerce on which our navigation and navy will essentially depend: I

mean the fisheries; in which, I have no doubt, the State of New York will, hereafter, have a considerable share.

To your Excellency I freely deliver my sentiments, because I am persuaded you cannot be a stranger to the force of these considerations. I fear not even to hazard them to the justice and good sense of those whom I have the honor to represent. I esteem it my duty to do it, because the question is important to the interests of the State, in its relation to the United States.

Those who consult only their passions, might choose to construe what I say, as too favorable to a set of men who have been the enemies of the public liberty: but those for whose esteem I am most concerned, will acquit me of any personal considerations; and will perceive that I only urge the cause of national honor, safety, and advantage. We have assumed an independent station: we ought to feel, and to act, in a manner consistent with the dignity of that station.

I anxiously wish to see every prudent measure taken to prevent those combinations which will certainly disgrace us, if they do not involve us in other calamities. Whatever distinctions are judged necessary to be made, in the cases of those persons who have been in opposition to the common cause, let them be made by legal authority, on a fair construction of the treaty, consistent with national faith and national honor.

Your Excellency will have been informed, that Congress have instructed General Washington to garrison the frontier posts, when surrendered, with the three years' Continental troops. This is more for the interest of the State, than to have them garrisoned at its particular expense: and I should wish that permanent provision might be made on the same principle. I wait to see whether any Continental peace establishment for garrisons, etc., will take place, before I engage the consent of Congress to a separate provision.

I cannot forbear adding a word on the subject of money. The only reliance we now have for redeeming a large anticipation on the public credit, already made, and making, for the benefit of the army, is on the taxes coming in. The collection, hitherto, is out of all proportion to the demand. It is of vast consequence, at

this juncture, that every thing possible should be done to forward it. I forbear entering into details which would be very striking upon this subject. I will only say, that unless there is a serious exertion in the States, public credit must ere long receive another shock very disagreeable in its consequences.

I have the honor to be,
With perfect respect,
Your Excellency's
Most obedient servant,
A. HAMILTON.

To His Excellency Governor Clinton.

HAMILTON TO REED.

1783.

SIR:

Having always entertained an esteem for you personally, I could not, without reluctance, yield to impressions that might weaken that sentiment: and it is with pain I find myself drawn, by circumstances, to animadvert upon the late message from the Executive Council to the Assembly of Pennsylvania relative to the mutiny, in a manner which may seem to impeach the candor of those who were the authors of it.

But it will be impossible for persons who have read the report of the committee, and the message of the Council, however inclined to make allowances for the force of involuntary bias, not to conclude, that on one side or the other, the facts have been wilfully discolored. I decline any attempt to set the public opinion right upon this subject; because, after all that can be said, the judgments of men will eventually be determined by personal and party prepossessions. So far as I am concerned, I persuade myself those who are acquainted with me, will place entire confidence in my fairness and veracity. I doubt not your Excellency's friends will be equally partial to you, and those of the Council to them. But though I should despair of rectifying or fixing the public opinion, by an appeal to the public; and

though I have seen too much of the ridicule thrown upon such appeals, from men in official stations, and of the ill effect they have had upon the national character, not to be willing to sacrifice the desire of justifying myself to considerations of prudence and propriety; yet I cannot forbear indulging my feelings so far as to enter into a few explanations with your Excellency; submitting the justness of them to the testimony of your own mind.

As this is a mere private discussion, I address myself to your Excellency in particular; and the rather, as, from the style and manner of the message, I take it for granted you had the principal agency in it: and I shall consider, on the same grounds, the notes in * paper of the *, as a comment on the report of the committee by yourself, in aid of the message.

I take up the matter individually, because I mean to treat it on a private footing; and because, though I do not acknowledge any peculiar responsibility, it happened to be my lot, as chairman, principally to conduct the conferences on the part of the committee.

I regard the whole of this business as a most unfortunate one; in which, probably, none of the actors will acquire great credit. I deplore it, as tending to interrupt the harmony between Congress and a respectable, a meritorious member of the Union. Who were right, or who were wrong, is a question of less importance, than how mutual irritations may be best healed. Whatever revives, or continues, the former, is to be regretted. I lament to be under an inducement to discuss circumstances that relate to it in the remotest degree. Nothing but an attack upon the ingenuousness of my conduct, could have called me to it. Its prudence, either collectively or individually, would patiently have been consigned to the lash of censure and criticism, merited or unmerited.

Happily, in the present case, the members of the committee have a strong ground, from which they cannot easily be forced.

* These blanks are in the manuscript.

Apprehensive of misconception, I will not say of misrepresentation, they tried to render it impossible by written documents. The presumption, with impartial minds, cannot fail to be in favor of that side which gave so decisive a proof of its disposition to fairness, as to endeavor to put it out of its own power to misrepresent.

The professed scruples of the Council, cannot be admitted to have any weight. Usage, and the plainest rules of propriety, will dictate, that it never could have wounded the dignity, or delicacy, of the executive of any State, to have given to a committee of Congress, appointed to confer on a subject of moment, a written answer to a request in writing after previous explanations. The fact stated speaks for itself. The consequences show, that the precaution of the committee was well judged; and that it would have been well for the Council to have concurred.

In the present case it might be observed, that there was, in the first instance, a written application from Congress to the Council, in the customary form of resolutions: and though a committee was authorized to confer and explain, a formal and authentic answer might reasonably have been expected by Congress; and, when desired by the committee, should have been understood as desired on their behalf.

There is an awkwardness in reasoning upon self-evident positions; but as the Council have, by their conduct in the first instance, and by their message since, put forward a doubt upon the subject, and made it a point of importance, I shall be excused for examining it a little further. On what could the objection of the Council be founded? They say it had been unusual. Admitting the fact, was the mere novelty of the thing a sufficient reason against it? If there was no apparent inconvenience in making a new precedent; if, on the contrary, there was a manifest convenience in it; ought not such a punctilio to have given way to considerations of utility?

Was it derogatory to the dignity of the Council? Surely, if they communicate in writing with the executive servants of Congress, even those in subordinate stations, as is the practice of

every day, and as is indispensable to the prosecution of public business, they might, at less expense of dignity, pursue the same mode with a part of that body itself.

The distinction taken by the Council, in their message to the Assembly, respecting the responsibility of such executive officers, as not applicable to a committee, if it amounts to any thing, proves only this: That such officers ought, in prudence, to take greater precautions for their own justification than a committee of Congress need to do. It is not to be inferred, if a committee of Congress, acting ministerially, think it expedient to use circumspection, that those with whom they are transacting business, can, with propriety, refuse to join with them in that mode which is best adapted to precision and certainty.

But, indeed, the ground of distinction is erroneous. A committee of Congress act in a ministerial capacity, and are therefore responsible to the body to which they belong, as well as the servants of that body, though in a different manner. If it be said they do not act ministerially, but stand in the place of Congress; then the Council, upon their own principles, ought to have complied with their request.

To diminish the exceptionableness of their refusal, it is true, as stated by the Council, that though they said they could not *condescend* to do what the committee had asked; yet they declared themselves willing to *grant* an answer in writing, if Congress should request it; and that they proposed, that the committee should put their verbal answer in writing, to be afterwards perused and examined by them.

The answer of the committee, as I doubt not your Excellency will recollect, was, as to the first point, that Congress in all probability would not make the request, having determined (as the Council had been already informed) not to resume their deliberations in the city, till effectual measures had been taken to suppress the mutiny; and should they assemble, would naturally feel a delicacy in requesting what had been denied to their committee. And as to the second point, that the Council having judged it inexpedient to give a written answer, the committee would content themselves with making the most accurate report in their

power, relying upon the confidence of the body to which they belonged, and upon the candor of the Council.

Your Excellency is too good a judge of human nature, as well as of the force of language, not to have perceived at the time, the effect which the refusal of the Council had upon my mind. I own it struck me, either as an uncandid reserve, or an unbecoming stateliness; and, in either supposition, a disrespect to the body of which the committee were members.

Though nothing enters less into my temper than an inclination to fetter business by punctilio, after the Council had discovered such overweening nicety, I should have thought it a degradation to my official character, to have consented to their proposal.

The desire of self-justification is so natural, that I should not have been surprised to have seen the transactions which are the subject of the Council's message, receive a coloring favorable to their purpose: but I did not expect to find material facts either suppressed or denied.

The report made by the committee on the first interview with the Council, was, I acknowledge, from memory, and therefore I admit a possibility of error; but, so far as my memory can be relied on, the representation was just. And I am certain that there is a mistake in the insinuation, that the circumstance of the message sent to Congress by the Board of Sergeants, was not mentioned at all to the Council; for I have a note of it, taken immediately after the first conference subsequent to the mutiny. The affair, by the event of , having assumed a more serious aspect, I kept a regular minute of the proceedings; a summary of which, made up our report to Congress, and which I shall annex, at large, to this letter for your Excellency's perusal.

The message entirely omits the declaration of the Council, that

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and the note says, that the Council only declared, "That they

* This blank is in the manuscript.

could not be sure, that such another insult would produce those exertions."* The difference in this article is of great importance. The declaration made so deep an impression at the time, that almost the precise words remained in my memory. They were twice repeated, as well when we saw your Excellency alone, in your own house, in the morning, as when you delivered to us, in the Council chamber, the determination of the Council.

Mr. Ellsworth†, in half an hour afterwards, repeated them to several members of Congress assembled at the President's house; and in a few hours from that time I committed them to writing. I cannot suppose your Excellency's recollection fails you in this particular; and I must pointedly appeal to your candor.

To show the inaccuracy with which the report of the committee was composed, it is observed, in the notes with respect to that part which relates to the commission given by the mutineers to the officers whom they had chosen to represent them, that only two hours had intervened between that event and the conference with the Council; and that it was very improbable the knowledge of it could have so early reached the committee. It is added, that none of the Council remembers to have heard a single syllable respecting it, during the whole conference.

As to the argument drawn from the short interval between the delivery of the commission and the conference, it will be sufficient to say, that the committee held a constant communication with General St. Clair, and that he kept a vigilant eye upon all the motions of the mutineers; that his access to them was easy; that the fact in question was a matter of immediate notoriety; that two hours were abundant time for a thing of that nature to be conveyed from the barracks to General St. Clair's quarters; and that one of the committee had actually seen, and obtained the intelligence from him, a little time before the interview with the Council commenced.

It is much more extraordinary that the Council should have

* "The words, as reported by the committee to Congress, were, 'It,' i. e., the arming of the citizens to suppress the mutineers, 'was not to be expected, merely from a repetition of the insult which had happened.'"—NOTE BY COL. PICKERING.

† "Mr. Ellsworth was the other member of the committee.—T. P."

been apprised of it so late, than that the committee should have known it so early. As to the memory of the Council, it is unfortunate it should have been so fallible as it is said to have been: but I would rather suppose, "in the quick succession of circumstances," the matter had escaped recollection, than that my minutes, as well as my memory, should have deceived me. I well recollect, also, that your Excellency, when it was mentioned, acknowledged that it rather contradicted the pacific appearance which the conduct of the troops, in other respects, wore.

These are the essential differences, in point of fact, between the report of the committee, and the message of Council: the whole complexion, indeed, of one, materially varies from the other; but the most common observer must have noticed, how different an aspect the same facts will bear, differently dressed and arranged. It was to avoid this, we proposed to reduce them to writing: but as this has not been done, spectators must judge, from the situation of the parties, and the course of the transactions, which side has given the justest relation.

I cannot, however, forbear remarking, that I see expressions of civility, on the part of the committee, making a figure in the message, very different from their genuine intention; being introduced in a manner that gives them the air of concessions in favor of the conduct of the Council. Your Excellency will certainly recollect, that the committee were very remote from a concurrence in sentiment with the Council; and though they did not presume to judge of the disposition of the citizens, strongly urged the expedience and necessity of calling out the militia, and facility of employing them with success against an unofficered and disorderly body of mutinous soldiers. It is true, also, that they acknowledged the candor with which the Council exposed to them, what they deemed the temper of their citizens, and their own difficulties and embarrassments; which were, no doubt, delineated with great energy of language, and display of circumstances: but they certainly never admitted the candor of refusing an answer in writing, which was a part of the *business* transacted with the Council; nor did they *withdraw*, without giving an intelligible intimation of their sense of this proceeding.

I was also surprised to see any part of the private and confidential conversation I had with your Excellency, ushered into the message from the Council; and moulded into such a shape, as to imply, by an obvious construction, an approbation of their reasons. Your Excellency will admit the following state of this transaction to be a just one.

I waited upon the Council to correct a piece of information I had given them respecting ammunition: but even this is misstated, as will be seen by my minutes. Having done this, my official business ended; when I was taken aside by your Excellency, and a conversation passed in declared confidence. You informed me, that a meeting of the militia officers was then holding, and in consultation with the Council about eventual measures (in consequence, as I conjectured, of a communication to you, the preceding evening, from the delegates of the State, of the intention of Congress to remove from the city, in case they did not receive satisfactory assurances of support). You added, that you hoped nothing would be precipitated; but that proper allowances would be made for the situation of the Council.

I understood your observations with reference to the departure of Congress, and replied to this effect: That I viewed the departure of Congress as a delicate measure, including consequences important to the national character abroad, and critical with respect to the State of Pennsylvania, and, in particular, the city of Philadelphia; that the triumph of a handful of mutinous soldiers, permitted in a place which is considered as the capital of America, to surround, and, in fact, imprison Congress, without the least effort, on the part of the citizens, to uphold their dignity and authority, so as to oblige them to remove from the place which had been their residence during the Revolution, would, it was to be feared, be viewed at a distance, as a general disaffection of the citizens to the Federal Government; might discredit its negotiations, and affect the national interests: that, at home, it might give a deep wound to the reputation of Pennsylvania; might draw upon it the resentments of the other States, and sow discord between Congress and the State; that the removal of Congress would probably bring the affair to a

crisis; and, by convincing the mutineers that extremities were intended, would either intimidate them into a submission, or determine them to immediate excesses; that, impressed with these considerations, and still hoping, notwithstanding some appearances to the contrary, that the mutineers might be sincere in their professions of submission, or that the Council, on further examination, would find it in their power to act with vigor, I had declined giving my assent to a report in writing, which would necessarily be followed by the departure of Congress; that though the committee had no discretion, by the powers under which they acted, but were bound by the tenor of their instructions, the moment they did not receive "satisfactory assurances of prompt and adequate exertions, on the part of the State, for supporting the public authority," to advise the adjournment of Congress to Trenton or Princeton; and I therefore considered the delay of this advice as at their extreme peril; yet, as to myself, I should persist in it, till the result of the present consultation with the militia officers, or till some new circumstance should turn up, to explain the designs of the mutineers; and in pursuing this line of conduct, I should counteract the sense of some gentlemen, whose feelings upon the occasion were keen, and the opinions of others, who thought the situation of Congress, under the existing circumstances, extremely awkward, precarious, and unjustifiable to their constituents.

Your Excellency approved my intention; wished for time; and promised, if any new resolution should be taken, to give me immediate notice of it.

The meeting of the militia officers dissolved. I heard nothing from your Excellency. General St. Clair, about two in the afternoon, informed the committee, that the officers appointed by the soldiers to manage their business, had, in the first instance, refused to give him an account of their transactions; the which was only extracted from them by a peremptory demand. He mentioned to us the instructions they had received from the soldiers, which contained faint and affected concessions, mixed with new and inadmissible claims.

The whole affair wore the complexion of collusion between

the officers of the committee and the soldiery; and of a mere amusement on their part, till they could gain fresh strength and execute their project, whatever it might be, with greater advantage.

This behavior of the officers gave the affair a new and more serious aspect, and overcame my opposition to the report. Mr. Peters, on hearing the relation of General St. Clair, declared, at once, that he thought the committee had then no alternative; at least, what he said was understood in this sense by General St. Clair, Mr. Ellsworth, and myself. If I am not much mistaken, General St. Clair also expressed his opinion that Congress were unsafe in the city.

The ideas I suggested to your Excellency, in the conversation I have mentioned, were substantially expressed to several members of Congress as the motives of my delay; and particularly, I recollect, to Mr. Madison, with these observations in addition: That though I was fully convinced Congress, under an immediate view of circumstances, would, in reality, be justified in withdrawing from a place where such an outrage to government had been with impunity perpetrated, by a body of armed mutineers, still, for several days, in complete command of the city, and where either the feebleness of public councils, or the indisposition of the citizens, afforded no assurance of protection and support; yet, as the opinions of men would be governed by events, and as the most probable event was, that the removal of Congress, announcing decisive measures of coercion to the soldiery, would awe them into submission, there was great danger that the reputation of Congress would suffer by the easy termination of the business; and that they would be accused of levity, timidity, or rashness.

Though not within the scope of my original intention, I will indulge a few additional reflections on this subject. I am sensible that the Council, in some respects, stand upon advantageous ground in this discussion. Congress left the city, because they had no forces at hand, no jurisdiction over the militia, and no assurances of effectual support from those who had. The Council, as the Executive of the State, were necessitated to remain

on the spot. Soon after Congress removed, the mutineers were deserted by their leaders, and surrendered at discretion.

The multitude will be very apt to conclude, that the affair was of trifling consequence; that it vanished under its own insignificance; that Congress took up the matter in too high a tone of authority; that they discovered a prudish nicety and irritability about their own dignity: that Council were more temperate, more humane, and possessed of greater foresight.

The bias in favor of an injured army; the propensity of the human mind to lean to the speciousness of professed humanity, rather than to the necessary harshness of authority; the vague and imperfect notions of what is due to public authority, in an infant popular government; and the insinuating plausibility of a well-constructed *message;* will all contribute to that conclusion.

But let us suppose an impartial man of sense, well acquainted with facts, to form an argument upon the subject. It appears to me, he might naturally fall into this train of combination.

It is a well known fact, that, from the necessities of the war, or the delinquencies of the several States, Congress were not enabled to comply with their engagements to the army, which, after a glorious and successful struggle for their country, much suffering, exemplary patience, and signal desert, they were compelled, by the irresistible dictates of an empty treasury and a ruined credit, to disband, after having given strong indications of their discontent, and resentment of the public neglect. A large part of the army suffer themselves to be patiently dismissed; a particular corps of four or five hundred men, stationed in the place where Congress reside, refuse to accept their discharges but on certain specified conditions.

They even go further, and, stimulated by their injuries, or encouraged and misled by designing persons, are emboldened to send a threatening message to Congress, declaring to them, that unless they would do them justice immediately, they would find means of redress for themselves. Measures are indirectly taken to appease this disorder, and give the discontented soldiers

as much satisfaction as the situation of things will permit. Shortly after, accounts are received, that another corps, at miles distance, have also mutinied; and that a part of them, to the number of about eighty men, are on their march to join those who had already discovered so refractory a disposition. A committee of Congress is immediately appointed to confer with the Executive of the State, on the measures proper to be pursued in this exigency. That committee, in the first instance, suggest to the Council, the expedience of calling out a body of militia, to intercept the detachment of mutineers on its march, and represent the danger of the progress of the spirit of mutiny, and of future outrages, should those on their march be suffered, without molestation, to join a more numerous corps in the same temper with themselves.

The Council urge a variety of difficulties: the shortness of the time to collect the militia before the mutineers would arrive; the reluctance with which the citizens would obey a call against men whom they consider as meritorious, and injured, and the like. The committee, perceiving the unwillingness of the Council to employ the militia, desist from pressing, and recur to expedients. The day after, the mutineers march in triumph into the city, and unite themselves with those who are already there; and the following day, the whole body assemble in arms, throw off all obedience to their officers, and, in open defiance of government, march to the place which is the usual seat of Congress and the Council of the State, while both are actually sitting; surround it with guards, and send a message to the Council, demanding authority to appoint, themselves, officers to command them, with absolute discretion to take such measures as those officers should think proper, to redress their grievances; accompanied with a threat, that if there was not a compliance in twenty minutes, they would let in an injured soldiery upon them, and abide the consequence.

The members of Congress who were at the time assembled, request General St. Clair, who happened to be present, to take such measures as he should judge expedient, without committing the honor of government, to divert the storm, and induce the

troops to return to their quarters without perpetrating acts of violence. General St. Clair, in concert with the Council, grants the mutineers permission to elect, out of officers then, or formerly, in commission, such as they should confide in, to represent their grievances to the Council, with a promise, that the Council would confer with the persons elected for that purpose. Having obtained this promise, the mutineers return to their quarters, in military parade, and continue in open defiance of government.

The concession made was a happy compromise between an attention to dignity, and a prudent regard to safety.

Men who had dared to carry their insolence to such an extreme, and who saw no opposition to their outrages, were not to be expected to retreat without an appearance, at least, of gratifying their demands. The slightest accident was sufficient to prompt men, in such a temper and situation, to tragical excesses.

But however it might become the delicacy of government not to depart from the promise it had given, it was its duty to provide effectually against a repetition of such outrages; and to put itself in a situation to give, instead of receiving, the law; and to manifest that its compliance was not the effect of necessity, but of choice.

This was not to be considered as the disorderly riot of an unarmed mob, but as the deliberate mutiny of an incensed soldiery, carried to the utmost point of outrage short of assassination. The licentiousness of an army is to be dreaded in every government; but, in a republic, it is more particularly to be restrained; and when directed against the civil authority, to be checked with energy, and punished with severity. The merits and sufferings of the troops might be a proper motive for mitigating punishment, when it was in the power of the government to inflict it; but it was no reason for relaxing in the measures necessary to put itself in that situation. Its authority was first to be vindicated, and then its clemency to be displayed.

The rights of government are as essential to be defended, as the rights of individuals. The security of the one is inseparable from that of the other. And, indeed, in every new govern-

ment, especially of the popular kind, the great danger is, that public authority will not be sufficiently respected.

But upon this occasion, there were more particular reasons for decision.

Congress knew there were, within two or three days' march of the city, a more considerable body of the same corps, part of which had mutinied and come to town, and had been the chief actors in the late disorder; that those men had, with difficulty, been kept, by the exertions of their officers, from joining the insurgents in the first instance; that there was another corps in their neighborhood which, a little time before, had also discovered symptoms of mutiny; that a considerable part of the same line which were in mutiny in town, was every moment expected to arrive from the southward, and, there was the greatest reason to conclude, would be infected with the same spirit, on their arrival, as had presently happened in the case of a small detachment which had joined a few days before; that there were, besides, large numbers of disbanded soldiers, scattered through the country, in want, and who had not yet had time to settle down to any occupation, and exchange their military for private habits; that some of these were really coming in, and adding themselves to the revolters; that an extensive accession of strength might be gained from these different quarters; and that there were all the sympathies of like common wrongs, distresses, and resentments, to bring them together, and to unite them in one cause. The partial success of those who had already made an experiment, would be a strong encouragement to others; the rather, as the whole line had formerly mutinied, not only with impunity, but with advantage to themselves.

In this state of things, decision was most compatible with the safety of the community, as well as the dignity of government. Though no general convulsion might be to be apprehended, serious mischiefs might attend the progress of the disorder. Indeed, it would have been meanness, to have negotiated and temporized with an armed banditti of four or five hundred men; who, in any other situation than surrounding a defenceless senate, could only become formidable by being feared. This was

not an insurrection of a whole people: it was not an army with their officers at their head, demanding the justice of their country; either of which might have made caution and concession respectable: it was a handful of mutinous soldiers, who had equally violated the laws of discipline, as the rights of public authority.

Congress, therefore, wisely resolve, that "it is necessary that effectual measures be immediately taken for supporting the public authority;" and call upon the State in which they reside, for the assistance of its militia, at the same time that they send orders for the march of a body of regular forces as an eventual resource.

There was a propriety in calling for the aid of the militia in the first place, for different reasons. Civil government may always, with more peculiar propriety, resort to the aid of the citizens, to repel military insults or encroachments.

'Tis there, it ought to be supposed, where it may seek its surest dependence, especially in a democracy, which is the creature of the people. The citizens of each State are, in an aggregate light, the citizens of the United States, and bound, as much to support the representatives of the whole, as their own immediate representatives. The insult was not to Congress personally; it was to the government, to public authority in general; and was very properly put upon that footing. The regular forces, which Congress could command, were at a great distance, and could not, but in a length of time, be brought to effectuate their purpose. The disorder continued to exist on the spot where they were; was likely to increase by delay; and might be productive of sudden and mischievous effects by being neglected.

The city and the Bank were in immediate danger of being rifled; and, perhaps, of suffering other calamities. The citizens, therefore, were the proper persons to make the first exertion.

The objection, that these were not the objects of the care of Congress, can only serve to mislead the vulgar. The peace and safety of the place which was the immediate residence of Congress, *endangered, too, by the troops of the United States*, demanded their interposition. The President of the State of Pennsylvania

was himself of this opinion; having declared to a member of that body, that as their troops were the offenders, it was proper for them to declare the necessity of calling out the militia, as a previous step to its being done.

Nor is there more weight in the supposition that the danger was inconsiderable; and that, from the pacific appearances of the troops, it was to be expected, the disorder would subside of itself. The facts were, that the troops still continued in a state of mutiny; had made no submissions, nor offered any; and that they affected to negotiate with their arms in their hands.

A band of mutinous soldiers, in such a situation, uncontrolled, and elated with their own power, was not to be trusted.

The most sudden vicissitudes and contradictory changes were to be expected; and a fit of intoxication was sufficient, at any moment, with men who had already gone such length, to make the city a scene of plunder and massacre. It was the height of rashness to leave the city exposed to the bare possibility of such mischiefs.

The only question, in this view, is, Whether there was greater danger to the city, in attempting their reduction by force, than in endeavoring, by palliatives, to bring them to a sense of duty? It has been urged, and appeared to have operated strongly upon the minds of the Council,* that the soldiers being already embodied, accustomed to arms, and ready to act at a moment's warning, it would be extremely hazardous to attempt to collect the citizens to subdue them, as the mutineers might have taken advantage of the first confusion incident to the measure, to do a great deal of mischief, before this militia could have assembled in equal or superior force.

It is not to be denied, but that a small body of disciplined troops, headed and led by their officers, with a plan of conduct, could have effected a great deal in similar circumstances; but it is equally certain, that nothing can be more contemptible, than a body of men, used to be commanded and to obey, when de-

* Your Excellency will recollect, that, in our private conversation, you urged this consideration, and appealed to my military experience; and that I made, substantially, the observations which follow.

prived of the example and direction of their officers. They are infinitely less to be dreaded than an equal number of men who have never been broken to command, nor exchanged their natural courage for that artificial kind which is the effect of discipline and habit. Soldiers transfer their confidence from themselves to their officers, face danger by the force of example, the dread of punishment, and the sense of necessity. Take away these inducements and leave them to themselves, they are no longer resolute than till they are opposed.

In the present case, it was to be relied upon, that the appearance of opposition would instantly bring the mutineers to a sense of their insignificance, and to submission. Conscious of their weakness, from the smallness of their numbers; in a populous city, and in the midst of a populous country; awed by the consequences of resisting government by arms, and confounded by the want of proper leaders and proper direction; the common soldiers would have thought of nothing but making their peace by the sacrifice of those who had been the authors of their misconduct.

The idea, therefore, of coercion, was the safest and most prudent: for more was to be apprehended from leaving them to their own passions, than from attempting to control them by force. It will be seen, by and by, how far the events, justly appreciated, corresponded with this reasoning.

Congress were not only right in adopting measures of coercion; but they were also right in resolving to change their situation, if proper exertions were not made by the particular government and citizens of the place where they resided. The want of such exertions would evince some defect, no matter where, that would prove they ought to have no confidence in their situation. They were, to all intents and purposes, in the power of a lawless, armed banditti, enraged, whether justly, or not, against them. However they might have had a right to expose their own persons to insult and outrage, they had no right to expose the character of representatives, or the dignity of the States they represented, or of the Union. It was plain, they could not, with propriety, in such a state of things, proceed in their deliberations

where they were; and it was right they should repair to a place where they could do it. It was far from impossible, that the mutineers might have been induced to seize their persons, as hostages for their own security, as well as with a hope of extorting concessions. Had such an event taken place, the whole country would have exclaimed, Why did not Congress withdraw from a place where they found they could not be assured of support; where the government was so feeble, or the citizens so indisposed, as to suffer three or four hundred mutinous soldiers to violate, with impunity, the authority of the United States, and of their own State?

When they resolved to depart, on the want of adequate exertions, they had reason to doubt their being made, from the disinclination shown by the Council to call out the militia in the first instance: and when they did actually depart, they were informed by the Council, that the efforts of the citizens were not to be looked for, even from a repetition of the outrage which had already happened; and it was to be doubted what measure of outrage would produce them. They had also convincing proof, that the mutiny was more serious than it had even at first appeared, by the participation of some of the officers.

To throw the blame of harshness and precipitancy upon Congress, it is said, that their dignity was only *accidentally* and *undesignedly* offended. Much stress has been laid upon the message, from the soldiery being directed to the Council, and not to them. All this, however, is very immaterial to the real merits of the question. Whatever might have been the first intention of the mutineers in this particular act, whether it proceeded from artifice or confusion of ideas, the indignity to Congress was the same. They knew that Congress customarily held their deliberations at the State House: and if it even be admitted, that they knew Saturday to be a day of usual recess, which, perhaps, is not altogether probable: when they came to the place they saw, and knew, Congress to be assembled there. They did not desist in consequence of this; but proceeded to station their guards, and execute their purposes. Members of Congress went out to them; remonstrated with them; represented the danger of their pro-

ceedings to themselves, and desired them to withdraw: but they persisted till they obtained what they supposed a part of their object. A majority of the same persons had, some days before, sent a message, almost equally exceptionable, to Congress; and at the time they scarcely spoke of any other body than Congress; who, indeed, may naturally be supposed to have been the main object of their resentments: for Congress, having always appeared to the soldiery, to be the body who contracted with them, and who had broken faith with them, it is not to be supposed they were capable of investigating the remote causes of the failures, so as to transfer the odium from Congress to the State.

But the substantial thing to be considered in this question, is the violation of public authority. It cannot be disputed, that the mutiny of troops is a violation of that authority to which they owe obedience. This was, in the present case, aggravated to a high degree of atrociousness, by the gross insult to the government of Pennsylvania, in the face of Congress, and in defiance of their displeasure. It was further aggravated by continuing in that condition for a series of time.

The reasons have been assigned, that made it incumbent upon Congress to interpose; and when they called upon the State of Pennsylvania, not only to vindicate its own rights, but to support their authority, the declining a compliance was a breach of the Confederation, and of the duty which the State of Pennsylvania owed to the United States. The best apology for the government of Pennsylvania, in this case, is, that they could not command the services of their citizens. But so improper a disposition in the citizens, if admitted, must operate as an additional justification to Congress, in their removal.

The subsequent events, justly appreciated, illustrate the propriety of their conduct. The mutineers did not make voluntary submissions in consequence of negotiation, persuasion, or conviction. They did not submit till after Congress had left the city, publishing their intentions of coercion; till after there had been an *actual call* upon the militia; till their leaders and instigators, alarmed by the approach of force, and the fear of being betrayed by the men, fled. They were reduced by coercion, not overcome by mildness.

It appears, too, that while they were professing repentance, and a return to their duty, they were tampering with the troops at Yorktown and Lancaster, to increase their strength; and that two officers, at least, were concerned in the mutiny, who, by their letters since, have confessed, that some project of importance was in contemplation.

The call for the militia was made the day after it had been pronounced ineligible by the Council. There could have been little change, in that time, either in the temper or preparations of the citizens. The truth is, that the departure of Congress brought the matter to a crisis; and that the Council were compelled, by necessity, to do what they ought to have done before, through choice.

It is to be lamented they did not, by an earlier decision, prevent the necessity of Congress taking a step which may have many disagreeable consequences. They then would

[*The residue of the manuscript is not found.*]

HAMILTON TO MADISON.

PRINCETON, June 29, 1783.

DEAR SIR:

I am informed, that, among other disagreeable things said about the removal of Congress from Philadelphia, it is insinuated, that it was a contrivance of some members, to get them out of the State of Pennsylvania, into one of those to which they belonged; and I am told, that this insinuation has been pointed at me in particular.

Though I am persuaded, that all disinterested persons will justify Congress in quitting a place where they were told they were not to expect support (for the conduct of the Council amounted to that), yet, I am unwilling to be held up as having had an extraordinary agency in the measure for interested purposes, when the fact is directly the reverse. As you were a

witness to my conduct and opinions through the whole of the transaction, I am induced to trouble you for your testimony upon this occasion. I do not mean to make a public use of it; but, through my friends, to vindicate myself from the imputations I have mentioned.

I will therefore request your answers to the following questions:

Did that part of the resolutions, which related to the removal of Congress, originate with me, or not?

Did I, as a member of the committee, appear to press the departure; or did I not rather manifest a strong disposition to postpone that event as long as possible, even against the general current of opinion?

I wish you to be as particular and full in your answer as your memory will permit. I think you will recollect, that my idea was clearly this: That the mutiny ought not to be terminated by negotiation; that Congress were justifiable in leaving a place where they did not receive the support which they had a right to expect; but, as their removal was a measure of a critical and delicate nature; might have an ill appearance in Europe; and might, from events, be susceptible of an unfavorable interpretation in this country; it was prudent to delay it till its necessity became apparent: not only till it was manifest there would be no change in the spirit which seemed to actuate the Council; but till it was evident, complete submission was not to be expected from the troops; that, to give full time for this, it would be proper to delay the departure of Congress till the latest period which would be compatible with the idea of meeting at Trenton or Princeton on Thursday—perhaps even till Thursday morning.

I am, Sir, your most obedient servant,

A. HAMILTON.

To James Madison, Junior, Esq.

HAMILTON TO JAMES MADISON, JR.

PHILADELPHIA, July 6, 1783.

DEAR SIR:

On my arrival in this city I am more convinced than I was of the necessity of giving a just state of facts to the public. The current runs strongly against Congress, and in a great measure for want of information. When facts are explained they make an impression, and incline to conclusions more favorable to us.

I have no copy of the Reports in my possession, which puts it out of my power to publish them. Will you procure and send me one without loss of time? Without appearing, I intend to give them to the public with some additional explanations. This done with moderation will no doubt have a good effect.

The prevailing idea is, that the actors in the removal of Congress were influenced by the desire of getting them out of the city, and the generality of the remainder by timidity—some say passion. Few give a more favorable interpretation.

I will thank you in your letter to me to answer the following question:

What appeared to be my ideas and disposition respecting the removal of Congress? Did I appear to wish to hasten it, or did I not rather show a strong disposition to procrastinate it?

I will be obliged to you in answering this question to do it fully. I do not intend to make any public use of it, but through my friends to vindicate myself from the insinuation I have mentioned, and in that to confute the supposition that the motive assigned did actuate the members on whom it fell to be more particularly active.

Yours,

A. HAMILTON.

HAMILTON TO MRS. HAMILTON.

PHILADELPHIA, July 22, 1783.

I wrote you, my beloved Eliza, by the last post, which I hope will not meet with the fate that many others of my letters must have met with. I count upon setting out to see you in four days; but I have been so frequently disappointed by unforeseen events, that I shall not be without apprehensions of being detained, till I have begun my journey. The members of Congress are very pressing with me not to go away at this time, as the House is thin, and as the definitive treaty is momently expected.

Tell your father that Mr. Rivington, in a letter to the South Carolina delegates, has given information, coming to him from Admiral Arbuthnot, that the Mercury frigate is arrived at New-York with the definitive treaty, and that the city was to be evacuated yesterday, by the treaty.

I am strongly urged to stay a few days for the ratification of the treaty; at all events, however, I will not be long absent.

I give you joy of the happy conclusion of this important work in which your country has been engaged. Now, in a very short time, I hope we shall be happily settled in New-York.

My love to your father. Kiss my boy a thousand times.

A. HAMILTON.

HAMILTON TO GOVERNOR CLINTON.

PRINCETON, July 27, 1783.

SIR:

A few days since I was honored with your Excellency's letter of the ; and was glad to find your ideas on the subject corresponded with mine.

As I shall, in a day or two, take leave of Congress, I think it my duty to give my opinion to the Legislature, on a matter of

importance to the State, which has been long depending, and is still without a prospect of termination in the train in which it has been placed: I mean the affair of the Grants. It is hazardous to pass a positive judgment on what will happen in a body so mutable as that of Congress; but from all I have seen, I have come to a settled opinion, that no determination will be taken and executed by them in any other manner, than in that prescribed by the Confederation. There is always such a diversity of views and interests; so many compromises to be made between different States; that, in a question of this nature, the embarrassments of which have been increased by the steps that have preceded, and in which the passions of the opposite sides have taken a warm part, decision must be the result of necessity. While Congress have a discretion, they will procrastinate: when they are bound by the Constitution, they must proceed.

It is, therefore, my opinion, that it will be advisable for the Legislature, when they meet, to review the question; and either to relinquish their pretensions to the country in dispute, or to instruct their delegates, if a decision is not had within a limited time, to declare the submission to Congress revoked, and to institute a claim according to the principles of the Confederation.

It would be out of my province to discuss which side of the alternative ought, in policy, to prevail: but I will take the liberty to observe, that if the last should be preferred, it would be expedient to remove every motive of opposition from private claims; not only by confirming, in their full latitude, previous to the trial, the possessions of the original settlers, but even the grants of the usurped government. It may happen, that it will be eventually necessary to employ force; and, in this case, it would be of great importance that neither the inhabitants of the Grants, nor powerful individuals in other States, should find their private interest in contradiction to that of the State. This has already had great influence in counteracting our wishes; would continue to throw impediments in the way of ulterior measures; and might at last kindle a serious flame between the States.

I communicated to your Excellency, in a former letter, that

I had declined pressing the application of the Legislature to Congress, respecting the State troops for garrisoning the frontier posts, because temporary provision had been made in another way, which would save the State the immediate expense; and because there was a prospect of some general provision for the defence of the frontiers on a Continental establishment, which was to be preferred on every account. A report for this purpose is now before Congress; but the thinness of representation has, for some time, retarded, and still retards, its consideration.

The definitive treaty is not yet arrived; but from accounts which, though not official, appear to deserve credit, it may be daily expected. A gentleman, known and confided in, has arrived at Philadelphia, who informs, that he saw a letter from Dr. Franklin to Mr. Barkeley, telling him that the definitive treaties were signed the twenty-seventh of May, between all the parties; that New-York was to be evacuated in six months from the ratification of the preliminaries in Europe, which will be the twelfth or fifteenth of next month.

As it is not my intention to return to Congress, I take this opportunity to make my respectful acknowledgments to the Legislature, for the honorable mark of their confidence conferred upon me, by having chosen me to represent the State in that body. I shall be happy if my conduct has been agreeable to them.

With perfect respect,
I have the honor to be,
Your Excellency's
Most obedient servant,
A. HAMILTON.

To his Excellency General Washington.

CLINTON TO DUANE AND L'HOMMEDIEU.

Aug. 23, 1783.

* * * * I would take this opportunity also of calling your attention to concurrent resolutions of the Legislature, respecting the garrisoning of the Western posts in this

State, which, by the provisional treaty, are to be evacuated by the British. These resolutions were in the tenor of instructions to our delegates, and were immediately transmitted to them; but as I have not been favored with any official information of the result, I submit it to you whether some report on a subject so interesting to the State, may not be necessary for the satisfaction of the Legislature. From informal communications made to me by the Commander-in-Chief, I have reason to believe, that he has directions from Congress for garrisoning those posts with continental troops, and that he is making arrangements for that purpose. But as you will observe, that as it was the sense of the Legislature, that those posts should have been garrisoned by the State, an explanation on the subject becomes the more necessary; and it is now for this reason alone, I would request, that you would be pleased to favor me with a particular detail of the motives which influenced the determination of Congress on this occasion. For it will readily be perceived, that should Congress, at this late day, accede to the propositions made by the State, it might be impracticable to carry them into execution, especially, as I have not ventured, in the state of uncertainty in which I was left, to incur the expense which the necessary preparations for the purpose would have required * * *

GEO. CLINTON.

DUANE AND L'HOMMEDIEU TO FLOYD AND HAMILTON.

PRINCETON, 1783.

HONORABLE GENTLEMEN:

We inclose you an extract of Dispatches from His Excellency our Governor, received this day, respecting the instructions of the Legislature, at their last session, for the security of the Western posts.

You will be pleased to observe, that an official Report, on a subject so interesting to the State, is deemed to be necessary; as well as a particular detail of the motives which influenced Con-

gress against the declared sense of the State; to give directions to the Commander-in-Chief for garrisoning those posts with Continental troops. This is a duty to which, not having been present at the debates, we find ourselves incompetent. We can therefore, only refer His Excellency and the Legislature to you, our worthy colleagues, who, being fully possessed of the facts, can alone give the necessary official information.

With sentiments of the most perfect esteem and regard,

We have the honor to be,

Gentlemen,

Your most obedient servants,

JAS. DUANE.

EZRA L'HOMMEDIEU.

The Honorable
Cols. William Floyd and
Alexander Hamilton.

JAY TO HAMILTON.

PASSY, Sept. 28, 1783.

DEAR SIR:

You was always of the number of those I esteemed, and your correspondence would both be interesting and agreeable. I had heard of your marriage, and it gave me pleasure, as well because it added to your happiness, as because it tended to fix your residence in a State of which I long wished you to be and remain a citizen.

The character and talents of delegates to Congress daily become more and more important, and I regret your declining that appointment at this interesting period. Respect, however, is due to the considerations which influence you, but as they do not oppose your accepting a place in the Legislature, I hope the State will still continue to draw advantage from your services; much remains to be done, and laborers do not abound.

I am happy to hear that terms of peace, and the conduct

of your negotiators, give general satisfaction: but there are some of our countrymen, it seems, who are not content; and that, too, with an article which I thought to be very unexceptionable; viz., the one ascertaining our boundaries. Perhaps those gentlemen are latitudinarians.

The American newspapers, for some months past, contain advices which do us harm. Violences and associations against the tories, pay an ill compliment to government, and impeach our good faith in the opinion of some, and our magnanimity in the opinion of many. Our reputation also suffers, from the apparent reluctance to taxes, and the ease with which we incur debts without providing for their payment. The complaints of the army; the jealousies respecting Congress; the circumstances which induced their leaving Philadelphia; and the too little appearance of a national spirit pervading, uniting, and invigorating the Confederacy, are considered as omens which portend the diminution of our respectability, power, and felicity.

I hope that, as the wheel turns round, other and better indications will soon appear. I am persuaded that America possesses too much wisdom and virtue, to permit her brilliant prospects to fade away for want of either.

The tories are almost as much pitied in these countries as they are execrated in ours. An undue degree of severity towards them, would, therefore, be impolitic, as well as unjustifiable. They who incline to involve that whole class of men in indiscriminate punishment and ruin, certainly carry the matter too far. It would be an instance of unnecessary rigor, and unmanly revenge, without a parallel, except in the annals of religious rage in times of bigotry and blindness. What does it signify where nine-tenths of these people are buried? I would rather see the sweat of their brows fertilize our fields than those of our neighbors. * * * * *

Victory and Peace should, in my opinion, be followed by Clemency, Moderation, and Benevolence: and we should be careful not to sully the glory of the Revolution, by licentiousness and cruelty. These are my sentiments: and however unpopular

they may be, I have not the least desire to conceal or disguise them.

Believe me to be,
With great regard and esteem, dear Sir,
Your most obedient humble servant,
JOHN JAY.

Colonel A. Hamilton.

HAMILTON TO WASHINGTON.

ALBANY, September 30, 1783.

DEAR SIR:

As I flatter myself I may indulge a consciousness that my services have been of some value to the public, at least enough to merit the small compensation I wish, I will make no apology to your Excellency, for conveying, through you, that wish to Congress. You are able to inform them, if they wish information, in what degree I may have been useful: and I have entire confidence that you will do me justice.

In a letter which I wrote to you several months ago, I intimated that it might be in your power to contribute to the establishment of our Federal Union upon a more solid basis. I have never since explained myself. At the time, I was in hopes Congress might have been induced to take a decisive ground; to inform their constituents of the imperfections of the present system, and of the impossibility of conducting the public affairs, with honor to themselves and advantage to the community, with powers so disproportioned to their responsibility; and, having done this, in a full and forcible manner, to adjourn the moment the definitive treaty was ratified. In retiring at the same juncture, I wished you, in a solemn manner, to declare to the people, your intended retreat from public concerns; your opinion of the present government, and of the absolute necessity of a change.

Before I left Congress I despaired of the first; and your circular letter to the States had anticipated the last. I trust it will

not be without effect; though I am persuaded it would have had more, combined with what I have mentioned. At all events, without compliment, sir, it will do you honor with the sensible and well meaning; and, ultimately, it is to be hoped, with the people at large, when the present epidemic frenzy has subsided.

I am, dear Sir,

With sincere esteem,

Your obedient servant,

A. HAMILTON.

To His Excellency General Washington.

HAMILTON TO WASHINGTON.

ALBANY, September 30, 1783.

SIR:

I think I may address the subject of this letter to your Excellency with more propriety than to any other person, as it is purely of a military nature; as you are best acquainted with my services as an officer; and as you are now engaged in assisting to form the arrangements for the future peace establishment.

Your Excellency knows, that in March, '82, I relinquished all claim to any future compensation for my services, either during the residue of the war, or after its conclusion—simply retaining my rank. On this foundation I build a hope, that I may be permitted to preserve my rank, on the peace establishment, without emoluments and unattached to any corps—as an honorary reward for the time I have devoted to the public. As I may hereafter travel, I may find it an agreeable circumstance to appear in the character I have supported in the Revolution.

I rest my claim solely on the sacrifice I have made; because I have no reason to believe that my services have appeared of any value to Congress; as they declined giving them any marks of their notice, on an occasion which appeared to my friends to entitle me to it, as well by the common practice of sovereigns,

as by the particular practice of this country in repeated instances.

Your Excellency will recollect, that it was my lot at York Town to command, as senior officer, a successful attack upon one of the enemy's redoubts; that the officer who acted in a similar capacity in another attack, made at the same time by the French troops, has been handsomely distinguished, in consequence of it, by the government to which he belongs; and that there are several examples among us, where Congress have bestowed honors upon actions, perhaps not more useful nor, apparently, more hazardous.

These observations are inapplicable to the present Congress, further than as they may possibly furnish an additional motive to a compliance with my wish.

The only thing I ask of your Excellency, is, that my application may come into view in the course of the consultations on the peace establishment.

I have the honor to be,
With sincere esteem,
Your Excellency's
Most obedient servant,
A. HAMILTON.

To His Excellency General Washington.

HAMILTON TO GOVERNOR CLINTON.

ALBANY, October 3, 1783.

SIR:

I have lately received from Messrs. Duane and L'Hommedieu, an extract of a letter from your Excellency to the delegates, of the twenty-third of August last, requesting "a particular detail of the motives which influenced the determination of Congress," respecting the application of the Legislature to have their State troops released from Continental pay, for the purpose of garrisoning the frontier posts.

In my letters to your Excellency, of the first of June and twenty-seventh of July, which were intended to be official, I summarily informed you, that Congress had made temporary provision for garrisoning the frontier posts, and that a plan was under deliberation relative to a peace establishment, which would, of course, embrace that object permanently; that such temporary provision being made at the common expense, and a general plan being under consideration for the future, I had declined pressing a compliance with the application of the Legislature; conceiving it to be more for the interest of the State, that the expense should be jointly borne, than that it should fall exclusively upon itself.

I did not enter into a more full detail upon the subject, because the business continued, to the time I left Congress, in an undecided state; and it was impossible to judge what views would finally prevail.

The concurrent resolutions of the two Houses had been immediately, on their receipt, referred to a committee appointed to report on a peace establishment, who had suspended their report on these resolutions, till it should appear, what would be the fate of a general plan which had been submitted.

As to the motives that influenced Congress in making the provision they did make, rather than immediately assenting to the application of the State; as far as I was able to collect them, they were these: The opinions of many were unsettled as to the most eligible mode of providing for the security of the frontiers, consistent with the Constitution, as well with respect to the general policy of the Union, as to considerations of justice to those States whose frontiers were more immediately exposed. A considerable part of the House appeared to think, from reasons of a very cogent nature, that the well-being of the Union required a federal provision for the security of the different parts; and that it would be a great hardship to individual States, peculiarly circumstanced, to throw the whole burthen of expense upon them, by recurring to separate provisions, in a matter, the benefit of which would be immediately shared by their neighbors, and, ultimately, by the Union at large: that, indeed, it was

not probable particular States would be either able, or, *upon experiment*, willing, to make competent provision at their separate expense; and that the principle might eventually excite jealousies between the States unfriendly to the common tranquillity.

I freely confess I was one who held this opinion.

Questions naturally arose as to the true construction of the articles of Confederation upon this head; questions as delicate as interesting, and as difficult of solution.

On one hand, it was doubted whether Congress were authorized by the Confederation, to proceed upon the idea of a federal provision: on the other, it was perceived that such a contrary construction would be dangerous to the Union, including, among other inconveniences, this consequence: That the United States, in Congress, cannot raise a single regiment, nor equip a single ship, for the general defence, till after a declaration of war, or an actual commencement of hostilities.

In this dilemma, on an important constitutional question; other urgent matters depending before Congress; and the advanced season requiring a determination upon the mode of securing the western posts in case of a surrender this fall; all sides of the House concurred in making a temporary provision, in the manner which has been communicated.

My apprehension of the views of the Legislature was simply this: That, looking forward to a surrender of the posts, and conceiving, from some expressions in the articles of Confederation, that separate provision was to be made for the frontier garrisons; they had thought it expedient to apply the troops already on foot to that purpose, and to propose to Congress to give their sanction to it.

Under this apprehension; reflecting, besides, that those troops were engaged only for a short period, upon a very improper establishment to continue, on account of the enormous pay to the private men; and that the expense which is now shared by all, and which would have fallen solely upon the State, had the application been complied with; would probably be at the rate of nearly eighty thousand dollars per annum, a considerable

sum for the State in its present situation; I acknowledge to your Excellency, that I saw with pleasure, rather than regret, the turn which the affair took. I shall be sorry, however, if it has contravened the intentions of the Legislature.

I will take the liberty to add, upon this occasion, that it has always appeared to me of great importance, to this State in particular, as well as to the Union in general, that Federal, rather than State, provision should be made for the defence of every part of the Confederacy, in peace as well as in war.

Without entering into arguments of general policy, it will be sufficient to observe, that this State is, in all respects *critically situated.*

Its relative position, shape, and intersections, viewed on the map, strongly speak this language.—Strengthen the Confederation; give it exclusively the power of the sword: let each State have no forces but its militia.

As a question of mere economy, the following considerations deserve great weight.

The North River facilitates attacks by sea and by land: and, besides the frontier forts, all military men are of opinion, that a strong post should be maintained at West Point, or some other position on the lower part of the river.

If Canada is well governed, it may become well peopled, and by inhabitants attached to its government. The British nation, while it preserves the idea of retaining possession of that country, may be expected to keep on foot there, a large force. The position of that force, either for defence or offence, will necessarily be such as will afford a prompt and easy access to us.

Our precautions for defence, must be proportioned to their means of annoying us: and we may hereafter find it indispensable to increase our frontier garrisons.

The present charge of a competent force in that quarter, thrown additionally, into the scale of those contributions which we must make to the payment of the public debt, and to other objects of general expense, if the Union lasts, would, I fear, enlarge our burthen beyond our ability: that charge, hereafter increased, as it may be, would be oppressively felt by the people.

It includes, not only the expense of paying and subsisting the necessary number of troops, but of keeping the fortifications in repair; probably of creating others; and of furnishing the requisite supplies of military stores. I say nothing of the Indian nations, because, though it will be always prudent to be upon our guard against them, yet, I am of opinion we diminish the necessity of it by making them our friends: and I take it for granted, there cannot be a serious doubt, any where, as to the obvious policy of endeavoring to do it. Their friendship, alone, can keep our frontiers in peace. It is essential to the improvement of the fur trade; an object of immense importance to the State. The attempt at the total expulsion of so desultory a people, is as chimerical as it would be pernicious. War with them is as expensive as it is destructive: it has not a single object; for, the acquisitions of their lands is not to be wished, till those now vacant are settled: and the surest, as well as the most just and humane way of removing them, is by extending our settlements to their neighborhood.

Indeed, it is not impossible they may be already willing to exchange their former possessions for others more remote.

The foregoing considerations would lose all force, if we had full security that the rest of the world would make our safety and prosperity the first object of their reverence and care: but an expectation of this kind would be too much against the ordinary course of human affairs; too visionary to be a rule for national conduct.

It is true, our situation secures us from conquest, if internal dissensions do not open the way: but when nations now make war upon each other, the object seldom is total conquest. Partial acquisitions; the jealousy of power; the rivalship of dominion, or of commerce; sometimes national emulation and antipathy; are the motives.

Nothing shelters us from the operation of either of these causes. The fisheries; the fur trade; the navigation of the lakes and of the Mississippi; the western territory; the Islands of the West Indies, with reference to traffic; in short, the passions of human nature, are abundant sources of contention and hostility.

I will not trespass further on your Excellency's patience. I expected, indeed, that my last letter would have finished my official communications; but Messrs. Duane and L'Hommedieu having transmitted the extract of your letter to Mr. Floyd and myself, in order that we might comply with what your Excellency thought would be expected by the Legislature, it became my duty to give this explanation. Mr. Floyd having been at Congress but a little time after the concurrent resolutions arrived, and being now at a great distance from me, occasions a separate communication.

I have the honor to be,
With perfect respect,
Your Excellency's
Most obedient servant,
A. HAMILTON.

N. B. I did not at the time inclose the resolution, directing the General to provide for garrisoning the frontier posts, because I understood it would in course be transmitted to you by the President, or the Secretary at War.

A. H.

To his Excellency Governor Clinton.

MADISON TO HAMILTON.

PRINCETON, October 16, 1783.

DEAR SIR:

Your favor of the sixth of July, by some singular ill luck, never found its way to my hands till yesterday evening.

The only part that now needs attention, is a request that I would answer the following question: "What appeared to be my ideas and disposition respecting the removal of Congress: did I appear to wish to hasten it, or did I not rather show a strong disposition to procrastinate it?" If this request had been

received at the time it ought, it might have been answered as fully as you then wished. Even after the delay which has taken place, my recollection enables me, with certainty, to witness, that the uniform strain of your sentiments, as they appeared, both from particular conversations with myself, and incidental ones with others in my presence, was opposed to the removal of Congress, except in the last necessity; that when you finally yielded to the measure, it appeared to be more in compliance with the peremptory expostulations of others than with any disposition of your own mind; and that after the arrival of Congress at Princeton, your conversation showed that you reviewed the removal, rather with regret than with pleasure.

Perhaps this obedience to your wishes may be too late to answer the original object of them. But I could not omit such an opportunity of testifying the esteem and regard with which I am

Your obedient servant,

J. MADISON, JR.

To the Hon. Alexander Hamilton, Esq.

WASHINGTON TO HAMILTON.

ROCKY HILL, October 18, 1783.

DEAR SIR:

I am favored with your two letters of the thirtieth of September.

The debate on Indian affairs, which, I believe, is got through, and that on the residence of Congress, which is yet in agitation, have entirely thrown aside, for some time, the consideration of the peace establishment. When it is resumed, I will take care that your application comes into view; and shall be happy if any thing in my power may contribute to its success; being, with great truth,

Dear Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

G. WASHINGTON.

To Colonel Hamilton.

McHENRY TO HAMILTON.

PRINCETON, October 22, 1788.

DEAR HAMILTON:

The homilies you delivered in Congress are still recollected with pleasure. The impressions they made are in favor of your integrity; and no one but believes you a man of honor and republican principles. Were you ten years older and twenty thousand pounds richer, there is no doubt but that you might obtain the suffrages of Congress for the highest office in their gift. You are supposed to possess various knowledge, useful, substantial, and ornamental. Your very grave and your cautious, your men who measure others by the standard of their own creeping politics, think you sometimes intemperate, but seldom visionary: and that were you to pursue your object with as much cold perseverance as you do with ardor and argument, you would become irresistible. In a word, if you could submit to spend a whole life in dissecting a fly, you would be, in their opinion, one of the greatest men in the world. Bold designs; measures calculated for their rapid execution; a wisdom tha would convince from its own weight; a project that would surprise the people into greater happiness, without giving them an opportunity to view it and reject it; are not adapted to a council composed of discordant elements, or a people who have thirteen heads, each of which pay superstitious adorations to inferior divinities.

I have been deterred, from day to day, from sending you the extract you desire, by a proclamation on the subject, which I expected would have passed. It is still *in dubio*. I have reported on Fleury's case, on the principle you recommend. I fear his half-pay will not be granted.

Congress, some time ago, determined to fix their Federal town on the Delaware, near Trenton. Yesterday they determined to erect a second Federal town on the Potomac, near Georgetown; and to reside equal periods (not exceeding one year) at Annapolis and Trenton, till the buildings are completed. We adjourn

the twelfth of next month, to meet at Annapolis the twenty-sixth.

Adieu, my dear friend; and in the days of your happiness drop a line to yours.

JAMES MCHENRY.

P. S. Our exemplification of the Treaty has passed, and will be transmitted to the State officially.

J. McH.

To the Hon. Alexander Hamilton, Esq.

WASHINGTON TO HAMILTON.

ROCKY HILL, November 6, 1783.

DEAR SIR:

The inclosed is a letter which I had written, and was about to dispatch at the date of it; but, upon second thoughts, determined to postpone it, and try, if, from the importance of the matter, I could not bring forward the peace establishment previously.

I have tried in vain. Congress, after resolving, on the——— of last month, to adjourn upon the twelfth of this, did, equally unexpectedly and surprisingly to me, finish their session at this place the day before yesterday; without bringing the peace establishment, or any of the many other pressing matters, to a decision.

Finding this was likely to be the case, I showed your letter to some of your particular friends; and consulted with them on the propriety of making known your wishes with my testimonial of your services to Congress; but they advised me to decline it, under a full persuasion that no discrimination would, or indeed, could, be made at this late hour, as every other officer, from the highest to the lowest grades (not in actual command), were retiring without the retention of rank; and that the remainder, upon a peace establishment (if a Continental one should ever take place), would come in upon the new system, under

fresh appointments; so that unless you wished to come into actual command again (which none supposed), they saw no way by which you could preserve your rank.

I have the pleasure to inclose you a brevet, giving you the rank of full Colonel.

I am, dear Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

G. WASHINGTON.

To Colonel Hamilton.

HAMILTON TO PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.

NEW-YORK, December 8, 1783.

SIR:

Being concerned as counsel for a number of persons who have been, since the annunciation of the provisional treaty, indicted under the confiscation laws of this State, for the part they are supposed to have taken in the late war, we are induced, at the desire of our clients, and in their behalf, to apply to Congress, through your Excellency, for an exemplification of the definitive treaty. We take it for granted, that ere this it will have been direction of the United States.

We have found a great strictness in the Courts in this State. It will, we apprehend, be necessary to be able to produce an exemplification of the treaty under the seal of the United States. In a matter so interesting to a great number of individuals, for it does not belong to us to urge considerations of national honor, we hope we shall be excused when we observe, that there appears to be no probability that the legislature of this State will interpose its authority to put a stop to prosecutions, till the definitive treaty is announced in form. In the mean time, a period is limited for the appearance of the indicted persons to plead to their indictments, and if they neglect to appear, judgment by default will be entered against them. It is therefore of great consequence to them, that we should have in our possession, as

speedily as possible, an authentic document of the treaty, and of its ratification by Congress; and we, on this account, pray an exemplification of both.

We persuade ourselves that the justice and liberality of Congress will induce a ready compliance with our prayer, which will conduce to the security of a great number of individuals who derive their hopes of safety from the national faith.

We have the honor to be with perfect respect,
Your Excellency's
Most obedient and humble servants,
A. HAMILTON & OTHERS.

His Excellency
The President of Congress.

HAMILTON TO J. B. CHURCH.

NEW-YORK, March 10, 1784.

MY DEAR SIR:

In my last to you I informed you that a project for a land bank had been set on foot by Mr. Sayre, as the ostensible parent; but that I had reason to suspect the Chancellor was the true father. The fact has turned out as I supposed, and the Chancellor, with a number of others, have since petitioned the Legislature for an exclusive charter for the proposed bank. I thought it necessary, not only with a view to your project, but for the sake of the commercial interests of the State, to start an opposition to this scheme; and took occasion to point out its absurdity and inconvenience to some of the most intelligent merchants, who presently saw the matter in a proper light, and began to take measures to defeat the plan.

The Chancellor had taken so much pains with the country members, that they all began to be persuaded that the land bank was the true Philosopher's stone that was to turn all their rocks and trees into gold; and there was great reason to apprehend a

majority of the Legislature would have adopted his views. It became necessary to convince the projectors themselves of the impracticability of their scheme; and to counteract the impressions they had made by a direct application to the Legislature. Some of the merchants, to effect these purposes, set on foot a subscription for a money bank, and called upon me to subscribe. I was a little embarrassed how to act, but upon the whole I concluded it best to fall in with them, and endeavor to induce them to put the business upon such a footing as might enable you, with advantage, to combine your interests with theirs; for since the thing had been taken up upon the broad footing of the whole body of the merchants, it appeared to me that it never would be your interest to pursue a distinct project in opposition to theirs; but that you would prefer, so far as you might choose to employ money in this way, to become purchasers in the general bank. The object, on this supposition, was to have the bank founded on such principles as would give you a proper weight in the direction. Unluckily, for this purpose, I entered rather late into the measure: proposals had been agreed upon, in which, among other things, it was settled that no stockholder, to whatever amount, should have more than seven votes, which was the number to which a holder of ten shares was to be entitled. At an after meeting of some of the most influential characters, I engaged them so far to depart from this ground, as to allow a vote for every five shares above ten.

The stockholders have since thought proper to appoint me one of the directors. I shall hold it till Wadsworth and you come out, and, if you choose to become parties to this bank, I shall make a vacancy for one of you. I inclose you the constitution, and the names of the President, Directors, and Cashier.

An application for a charter has been made to the Legislature, with a petition against granting an exclusive one to the land bank. The measures which have been taken appear to have had their effect upon the minds of the partisans of the land bank.

The affairs of the bank in Pennsylvania appear to be in some confusion. They have stopped discounts; but I have no

apprehension that there is any thing more in the matter than temporary embarrassment from having a little overshot their mark in their issues of paper, and from the opposition which the attempt to establish a new bank had produced.

Yours affectionately,

A. HAMILTON.

J. B. Church, Esq.

HAMILTON TO FITZSIMMONS.

NEW-YORK, March 21, 1784.

DEAR SIR:

Permit me to introduce to your acquaintance and attention Mr. Seton, Cashier of the Bank of New-York. He is just setting out for Philadelphia to procure materials and information in the forms of business. I recommend him to you, because I am persuaded you will with pleasure facilitate his object. Personally, I dare say you will be pleased with him.

He will tell you of our embarrassments and prospects. I hope an incorporation of the two banks, which is evidently the interest of both, has put an end to differences in Philadelphia. Here a wild and impracticable scheme of a land bank stands in our way; the projectors of it persevering in spite of the experience they have, that all the mercantile and moneyed influence is against it.

A. HAMILTON.

WILLIAM SETON TO HAMILTON.

PHILADELPHIA, 27 March, 1784.

DEAR SIR:

You will observe by my letter of this day to our President, that I have been requested to postpone my visit to the bank until they shall be well informed that the Bank of New-York has, or actually will, obtain a charter. Although I am confident this is only an ostensible reason for not wishing to see me at the

bank, it will be highly necessary I should be regularly informed of what is doing in this respect, that I may be able to speak fully and with firmness to the subject; therefore, exclusive of any letter the director may write to me, I trust you will communicate to me whatever may appear to you essential for me to know.

The fact is (and which cannot be communicated to the many, and therefore not mentioned in my official letter), their motive for not wishing to see me at the bank just now, arises from their being at present in very great confusion—the opposition of the new bank began it, and being pressed so hard by this opposition, they were obliged to lay themselves so open, that it evidently appeared, if carried further, it would strike too fatal a blow. Therefore, for the safety of the community at large, it became absolutely necessary to drop the idea of a new bank, and to join hand in hand to relieve the old bank from the shock it had received. Gold and silver had been extracted in such amounts that discounting was stopped, and for this fortnight past not any business has been done at the bank in this way. The distress it has occasioned to those dependent on circulation and engaged in large speculations, is severe; and, as if their cup of misery must overflow, by the last arrival from Europe, intelligence is received that no less a sum than £60,000 sterling of Mr. Morris's bills, drawn for the Dutch loan, are under protest. It is well known that the bank, by some means or other, must provide for this sum. The child must not desert its parent in distress, and, such is their connection, that whatever is fatal to the one must be so to the other. However, the man who has more than once, by his consummate abilities, saved the American Empire from ruin, will no doubt be found equal to overcome these temporary inconveniences, and to restore universal confidence and good order. I trust you will be guarded in your conversation with others on this subject, lest it might recoil on me, and not only place me in a disagreeable situation, but defeat the purposes of my coming here. I have had several interviews with our friend Gov. Morris; he is for making the bank of New-York a branch of

the bank of North America, but we differ widely in our ideas of the benefit that would result from such a connection.

If it will not be intruding too much upon your time and goodness, may I request that you will now and then inform me what is doing by our Legislature, and permit me to assure you, that it will ever give me singular pleasure to have it in my power to evince the respect and esteem with which

I am, dear Sir,

Your ob't and very humble serv't,

WM. SETON.

Alexander Hamilton, Esq.

HAMILTON TO GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

NEW-YORK, April 4, 1784.

Pardon me, my dear sir, for not sooner having obeyed your orders with respect to the inclosed. I part with it reluctantly; for wit is so rare an article, that when we get so much of it in so small a compass, we cannot easily consent to be dispossessed of it. I am very happy to hear of the union of your two Banks; for you will believe me when I tell you, that, on more deliberate consideration, I was led to view the competition in a different light from that in which it at first struck me. I had no doubt that it was against the interests of the proprietors; but, on a superficial view, I perceived benefits to the community, which, on a more close inspection, I found were not real.

You will call our proceedings here *strange doings*. If some folks were paid to counteract the prosperity of the State, they could not take more effectual measures than they do. But it is in vain to attempt to kick against the pricks.

Discrimination bills; partial taxes; schemes to engross public property in the hands of those who have present power; to banish the real wealth of the State, and to substitute paper

bubbles; are the only dishes that suit the public palate at this time.

Permit me to ask your opinion on a point of importance to the New-York Bank—the best mode of receiving and paying out gold. I am aware of the evils of that which has been practised upon in Philadelphia—*weighing in quantities;* but I cannot satisfy myself about a substitute, unless there could be a coinage.

Favor me with your sentiments on this subject as soon as you can.

Believe me, with equal warmth and sincerity,

Yours,

A. HAMILTON.

To Gouverneur Morris, Esq.

HAMILTON TO DE CHASTELLUX.

NEW-YORK, June 14, 1784.

MONSIEUR LE CHEVALIER:

Colonel Clarkeson, who will have the honor of delivering you this, being already known to you, I give him this letter more for the sake of renewing to you the assurances of my attachment and esteem, than from a supposition that he will stand in need of any new title to your attention. I will therefore only say of him, that his excellent qualities cannot be known without interesting those to whom they are known, and that from a personal and warm regard for him, I should be happy, if any thing I could say, could be an additional motive for your countenance and civilities to him.

I speak of him in the light of a friend. As the messenger of Science, he cannot fail to acquire the patronage of one of her favorite ministers. He combines with the views of private satisfaction, which a voyage to Europe cannot but afford, an undertaking for the benefit of a Seminary of learning, lately instituted in this State.

Learning is the common concern of mankind; and why may not poor republicans, who can do little more than wish her well, send abroad to solicit the favor of her patrons and friends? Her ambassador will tell you his errand. I leave it to your mistress to *command* and to the trustees of the institution to *ask* your interest in promoting his mission.

Permit me only to add, that if there is any thing in this country by which I can contribute to your satisfaction, nothing will make me happier at all times, than that your commands may enable me to give you proofs of the respectful and affectionate attachment with which

I have the honor to be,
Monsieur Le Chevalier,
Your most ob't and humble serv't,
A. H.

Le Chevalier De Chastellux.

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS TO HAMILTON.

PHILADELPHIA, June 30, 1784.

DEAR HAMILTON:

This is rather a late period to acknowledge yours of the seventh of April. I have lived in the constant intention to answer it, and I now execute my purpose. But why not sooner? "Procrastination is the thief of time," says Dr. Young. I meant to have written fully on the subject of the gold. But I waited some informations from Annapolis on the probability of a Mint. I afterwards intended a long letter upon a subject I mentioned to Mr. Seton, namely, a coalition between your Bank and the National Bank. I do not find either party inclined to it. And yet both would be the better for it. You, I believe, will soon be out of blast unless it should take place. I could say a great deal on this subject, but it would be very useless. When you find your cash diminish very fast, remind Seton of my predic-

tions, and let him tell you what they were. If the Legislature should attempt to force paper money down your throats, it would be a good thing to be somewhat independent of them. But I must check myself, or I shall go too far into a business which would plague us both to no purpose. It shall be left, therefore, until we meet.

Very affectionately yours,

GOUV. MORRIS.

Alexander Hamilton, Esq.

LA FAYETTE TO HAMILTON.

ALBANY, Oct. 8, 1784.

DEAR HAMILTON:

* * * * * * *

Several delays have retarded the opening of the Treaty; and when I was upon the ground, it has been found that my influence with the Indians, both friendly and hostile tribes, was much greater than the Commissioners, and even myself, had conceived; so that I was requested, even by every one of the tribes there, to speak to those nations. There were some, more or less, from each tribe. I stayed as long as the Commissioners thought I could do them some good; and that has rather cramped my private plans of visits.

Now, my dear friend, I am going to Hartford, Boston, Newport; from thence, by water, to Virginia, in order to save time; and about the twentieth of next month I hope to be again with you in New-York: but before that time will write you from Newport.

Adieu, my dear Hamilton.

Most affectionately I am yours,

LA FAYETTE.

P. S. I am told Mr. Jay is not determined upon accepting. I much wish he may consent to it; the more so, as his probable successor does not hit my fancy. Indeed, I very much wish Mr. Jay may accept the office.

To Colonel Hamilton.

LA FAYETTE TO HAMILTON.

Boston, Oct. 22, 1784.

My Dear Hamilton:

Every step I move, there comes upon me a happy necessity to change my plans. The reception I met with in Boston no words can describe; at least it is impossible to express what I have felt. Gratitude as well as propriety conspired with all other inducements to keep me here some time longer. Rhode Island and New Hampshire I must visit, and intend embarking by the first or second day of next month for Virginia, in the Nymph frigate, which has been sent on my account. In less than four weeks' time from this day, I hope to be with Congress; and when my business there is concluded, will come to New-York, where I hope we will spend some days together. My stay in your city has been too short, far inadequate to the feelings of my gratitude, and to the marks of goodness bestowed upon me; but this time I will be some days longer with my New-York friends.

Upon reflecting on my situation, my circumstances, my love for America, and yet the motives that might render it improper for her to employ me in a public capacity, I have confined myself to a plan which, at the same time that it gratifies my attachment and serves the United States, cannot have any shadow of inconvenience. After having told me they know my zeal, I wish Congress to add, they want me to continue those friendly, and, I might say, patriotic exertions; that in consequence of it, their ministers at home, and their ministers abroad, will have a standing order to look to me as one whose information and exertions will ever be employed to the service of the United States; and when they think it is wanted, to communicate with me upon the affairs of America; that Congress will, whenever I think it proper, be glad of my correspondence.

Upon that general scale, every minister may conceal from me what he pleases, may write to me only when he pleases; and

should he ever think my assistance is wanting, he has a title to ask, I have one to give it; and my connection with America is for ever kept, without giving jealousy, upon such a footing as will remain at the disposition of each public servant of Congress.

It seems to me, my dear friend, this idea already met with your approbation. In case it does, do promote it with your delegates and others. If it does not, write it to me by the bearer whom I send by land to apologize to the General for my delays.

Our friend Knox has been most affectionate and kind to me.

Yours for ever,

LA FAYETTE.

P. S. I have written to Wadsworth, and spoken to Bostonians respecting the Baron's affairs. I will do the same in Virginia, Maryland, and elsewhere.

To Alexander Hamilton, Esq.

LA FAYETTE TO HAMILTON.

PARIS, April 13, 1785.

MY DEAR HAMILTON:

Although I have just now written to McHenry, requesting him to impart my Gazette to you, a very barren one indeed, I feel within myself a want to tell you, I love you tenderly. Your brother Church has sailed for America, since which I had a letter from his lady, who is in very good health. By an old letter from our friend Greene, I have been delighted to find he consents to send his son to be educated with mine; the idea makes me very happy. I wish, dear Hamilton, you would honor me with the same mark of your friendship and confidence. As there is no fear of a war, I intend visiting the Prussian and Austrian troops. In one of your New-York Gazettes, I find an association against the slavery of negroes, which seems to me worded in such a way as to give no offence to the moderate men in the southern

States. As I ever have been partial to my brethren of that color, I wish, if you are one in the society, you would move, in your own name, for my being admitted on the list. My best respects wait on Mrs. Hamilton. Adieu.

Your affectionate friend,

LA FAYETTE.

JOHN ADAMS TO HAMILTON.

GROSVENOR-SQUARE, LONDON, Oct. 19, 1785.

SIR:

At the instance of Mr. Hartley, in behalf of his friend, Mr. Francis Upton, I advised Mr. Upton to apply to some counsellor in New-York, and particularly to Mr. Hamilton, whose reputation was known to me, although his person was not.

Mr. Hartley now requests for Mr. Upton a letter of introduction. As a total stranger, but by character, it would be very difficult to find a pretence to excuse the liberty I take in presenting Mr. Upton to you, and recommending his case to your attention. But, as we say at the bar, where I wish I was, *valeat quantum valere potest.* With much esteem,

I have the honor to be, Sir,

Your most obedient and most humble servant,

JOHN ADAMS.

Mr. Hamilton.

HAMILTON TO WILKES.

November, 8, 1785.

SIR:

The message which you sent me yesterday, and your letter to-day, were conceived in terms to which I am little accustomed. Were I to consult my feelings only upon the occasion, I should return an answer very different from that which I have, in jus-

tice to my own conduct, resolved upon. But in whatever light we are to view each other hereafter, and however harsh and indelicate I may think the method you have taken to obtain an explanation to be, I shall, for my own part, leave no room to suppose that I intentionally gave you any cause to complain. I shall, therefore, explicitly declare, that whatever inattention may have appeared towards you, was solely owing to the continual hurry in which my engagements, for a long time past, have kept me; and that, so far from its having been occasioned by any designed neglect, it was what, under the circumstances, might have happened to my best friend. Indeed, much of what you mention to have been done by you, I am a stranger to. The frequent callings, by yourself and by your servant, did not, that I recollect, come to my knowledge. It is possible some of them might have been mentioned to me, and, in the hurry of my mind, forgotten. Once, I remember, I saw your servant just as I was going out on some urgent business. I sent a verbal message, promising that I would see you; which I intended to do, as soon as I had made up my resolution on the business of the interview. When I received your note I was about sending you an answer in writing; but, upon inquiring for your servant, and finding him gone, I omitted it, with an intention to see you personally.

You say it is near six months since you first applied to me on the business in question. A great part of the time I gave you all the answer I could give you; to wit, that I had written to Mr. Macaulay, and only waited his answer. About two months since, I received it. I have been the greater part of the time out of town on indispensable business. In the intervals I have been occupied about objects of immediate and absolute necessity, which could not have been delayed without letting my business run into utter confusion. Mr. Macaulay's concerns have been hanging upon my spirits. I have been promising myself, from day to day, to bring them to a conclusion; but more pressing objects have unavoidably postponed it. I thought the delay required some apology to Mr. Macaulay, but I never dreamt of having given occasion of offence to you.

I will not, however, deny, upon a review of what has passed,

that there have been, through hurry and inadvertency on my part, appearances of neglect towards you; but between gentlemen and men of business, unfavorable conclusions ought not to be drawn before explanations are asked. Allowances ought to be made for the situations of parties; and the omissions of men, deeply involved in business, ought rather to be ascribed to that cause than to ill intentions.

Had you, in the first instance, expressed to me (in such a manner as respect for yourself and delicacy to me dictated) your sense of these appearances, I should have taken pains to satisfy you that nothing improper towards you was intended by me. But to make one of my clerks the instrument of communication, and the bearer to me of a harsh accusation, was ill-judged and ungenteel. To take it for granted that you had received an injury from me, without first giving me an opportunity of an explanation, and to couch your sense of it in terms so offensive as some of those used in your letter, is an additional instance of precipitation and rudeness.

Inadvertencies susceptible of misapprehension, I may commit; but I am incapable of intending to wound or injure any man who has given me no cause for it; and I am incapable of doing any thing, sir, of which I need be ashamed. The intimation, on your part, is unmerited and unwarrantable. After thus having explained my own conduct to you, and given you my ideas of yours, it will depend on yourself how far I shall be indifferent, or not, to your future sentiments of my character. I shall only add, that to-morrow you shall receive from me my determination on the matter of business between us.

I am, with due consideration, Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

A. HAMILTON.

To John Wilkes, Esq.

WILKES TO HAMILTON.

November 9, 1785.

Sir:

The moment I received yours, I perceived the precipitancy of my own conduct, and was very sorry I had so far mistaken both our characters to act in the manner I have done. I flatter myself, that the same candor which has dictated yours, will be exerted towards mine, and that you will only view it as the act of a man who conceived himself injured. As you have never experienced the cruel reverses of fortune, you can scarcely judge how the least insinuations to their prejudice will affect those persons who have; or how much more suspicious they are of the behavior of mankind towards them.

The morning I left the message for you, I had been called upon by one of the creditors of Mr. Heart, who thought it very strange no dividend was made; and he insinuated, some party must be interested in the delay. It is the first money transaction I have engaged in since my release. I felt the insinuation as alluding to me, and with a force, which, perhaps, I should not. However, that moment I went to your office.

The next morning, when I saw your note to Mr. Atkinson, and found myself totally set aside in a business where I had, most undoubtedly, been originally neglected, I felt myself very much agitated; and in that frame of mind I wrote my last to you.

So much I thought it necessary to add in explanation.

I am convinced, now, I have been too hasty; and I am sorry for it. It will put me on my guard in future, and I make no doubt prove beneficial to me, provided it has not been the means of hurting me in your estimation, which I am now more desirous than ever of obtaining.

I am, Sir, with respect,
Your much obliged,
And most obedient servant,
JOHN WILKES.

To Colonel Hamilton.

HAMILTON TO WASHINGTON.

November 23, 1785.

DEAR SIR:

Major Fairly is just setting out on a visit to you, I believe on some business relating to the Cincinnati. The society of this State met some short time since, and took into consideration the proposed alterations in the original frame of the Institution: some were strenuous for adhering to the old Constitution, a few for adopting the new, and many for a middle line. This disagreement of opinion, and the consideration that the different State societies pursuing different courses—some adopting the alterations entire; others rejecting them in the same way; others adopting in part and rejecting in part—might beget confusion and defeat good purposes, induced a proposal, which was unanimously agreed to, that a committee should be appointed to prepare and lay before the society, a circular letter, expressive of the sense of the society on the different alterations proposed, and recommending the giving powers to a general meeting of the Cincinnati, to make such alterations as might be thought advisable, to obviate objections and promote the interests of the society. I believe there will be no difficulty in agreeing to change the present mode of continuing the society; but it appears to be the wish of our members, that some other mode may be defined and substituted, and that it might not be left to the uncertainty of legislative provision. We object, too, to putting the funds under legislative direction. Indeed, it appears to us, the Legislatures will not, at present, be inclined to give us any sanction.

I am of the committee; and I cannot but flatter myself, that when the object is better digested, and more fully explained, it will meet your approbation.

The poor *Baron* is still soliciting Congress, and has every prospect of indigence before him. He has his imprudences; but, upon the whole, he has rendered valuable services; and his

merits and the reputation of the country, alike, demand that he should not be left to suffer want.

If there could be any mode by which your influence could be employed in his favor, by writing to your friends in Congress, or otherwise, the Baron and his friends would be under great obligations to you.

I have the honor to be,
With sincere esteem,
Your ob't and humble serv't,
ALEX. HAMILTON.

To His Excellency General Washington.

WASHINGTON TO HAMILTON.

MOUNT VERNON, December 11, 1785.

DEAR SIR:

I have been favored with your letter of the twenty-third of November, by Major Fairly.

Sincerely do I wish that the several State societies had, or would adopt the alterations that were recommended by the general meeting, in May, seventeen hundred and eighty-four. I then thought, and have had no cause since to change my opinion, that if the society of the Cincinnati mean to live in peace with the rest of their fellow-citizens, they must subscribe to the alterations which were at that time adopted.

That the jealousies of, and prejudices against, this society, were carried to an unwarrantable length, I will readily grant; and that *less* than was done, *ought* to have removed the fears which had been imbibed, I am as clear in, as I am that it would not have done it. But it is a matter of little moment, whether the alarm which seized the public mind was the result of foresight, envy, and jealousy, or a disordered imagination: the effect of perseverance would have been the same. Wherein, then, would have been found an equivalent for the separation of in-

terests which (from my best information, not from one State only, but many) would inevitably have taken place?

The fears of the people are not yet removed; they only sleep; and a very little matter will set them afloat again. Had it not been for the predicament we stood in with respect to the foreign officers and the charitable part of the Institution, I should, on that occasion, as far as my voice would have gone, have endeavored to convince the narrow-minded part of our countrymen, that the *amor patriæ* was much stronger in our breasts than theirs, and that our conduct, through the whole of the business, was actuated by nobler and more generous sentiments than were apprehended, by abolishing the society at once, with a declaration of the causes, and the purity of its intention. But the latter may be interesting to many, and the former is an insuperable bar to such a step.

I am sincerely concerned to find, by your letter, that the Baron is again in straitened circumstances. I am much disinclined to ask favors of Congress; but if I knew what the object of his wishes are, I should have much pleasure in rendering him any service in my power, with such members of that body as I now and then correspond with. I had flattered myself, from what was told me some time ago, that Congress had made a final settlement with the Baron much to his satisfaction.

I am, dear Sir,

Your most obedient humble servant,

G. WASHINGTON.

To Alex. Hamilton, Esq.

HAMILTON TO NATHANIEL HAZARD.

April 24, 1786.

SIR:

Your letter of the twenty-first was only delivered me this morning. The good opinion of liberal men I hold in too high estimation not to be flattered by that part of your letter which

relates to me personally. The other part I have communicated to General Schuyler, and he assures me he will see all his friends this afternoon upon the subject; so that I have no doubt, as far as his influence extends, it will be employed in favor of the success of the bill in the Assembly, as it has already been in the Senate.

In taking this step, however, I would not be understood to declare any opinion concerning the principles of the bill, with which I am not sufficiently acquainted to form a decided opinion. I have merely made your letter the occasion of introducing the subject to General Schuyler, whose sentiments are as favorable to your wishes as you could desire.

I make this observation from that spirit of candor which I hope will always direct my conduct. I am aware that I have been represented as an enemy to the wishes of what you call your corps. If by this has been meant that I do not feel as much as any man, not immediately interested, for the distresses of those merchants who have been in a great measure the victims of the Revolution, the supposition does not do justice either to my head or my heart. But if it means that I have always viewed the mode of relieving them as a matter of peculiar delicacy and difficulty, it is well founded.

I should have thought it unnecessary to enter into this explanation, were it not that I am held up as a candidate at the ensuing election; and I would not wish that the step I have taken, in respect to your letter, should be considered as implying more than it does; for I would never wish to conciliate at the expense of candor. On the other hand, I confide in your liberality not to infer more than I intend from the explanation I have given; and hope you will believe me to be, with great cordiality and esteem,

Dear Sir,

Your obedient servant,

A. HAMILTON.

To Mr. Hazard.

CUSHING, DANA, AND BRECK TO HAMILTON.

NEW-YORK, Sept. 10, 1786.

GENTLEMEN:

Understanding, on our arrival in this city last Friday evening, that you had gone on for the Convention at Annapolis the week past, we take the liberty to acquaint you, and beg you to communicate to the Convention, if it should be opened before we arrive there, that we shall set off from this place to-morrow to join them, as Commissioners from the State of Massachusetts, which we hope to do in the course of this week. The Commissioners from Philadelphia were to sail from thence for this city, on the seventh instant, so that they may be expected soon after us.

With great respect,

Your most obedient humble servants,

THOMAS CUSHING.
F. T. H. DANA.
SAML. BRECK.

The Gentlemen
Commissioners for New-York.

LA FAYETTE TO HAMILTON.

PARIS, April 12, 1787.

MY DEAR HAMILTON:

It is an age since I heard from you. Of you I hear by some of our friends, and in the newspapers. But although I have a right to complain, I want to let you know the proceedings of our Assembly, which, as it is unusual in France, may raise your curiosity.

Our Constitution is pretty much what it was in England before it had been fairly written down and minutely preserved; so that we have great claims to freedom, to a National Representa-

tion, to the denial of taxes, &c., &c. But disposition on one hand, and levity on the other have manœuvred us out of almost every privilege. They will still subsist, however, more or less, in some provinces, and particularly in those of Bretagne.

Now that the follies of Courts had obliged Government to saddle us with new taxes, and the opposition of our magistrates did present itself as an obstacle to the ministers, they have thought proper to call an Assembly of Notables, chosen by the king, but taken among the first people in *each* order, and to begin with granting them what is more wished for by the nation, an Assembly in each Province.

The last Assembly of Notables, in 1626, had been obedient to the ministers. This one came at a more enlightened period. It happened under a minister, who, although he has parts, is not equal to some of the members—men of fine abilities. We are backed by the nation, and although not her representatives, have behaved as her interpreters, and we have formed a great majority in favor of popular measures.

The speeches from the throne, those of M. de Calonne, have been printed: the last one contains many falsehoods. The first measure we took was for the clergy to declare they were ready to pay in the same proportion with other people, for the Noblesse to make the same declaration, and reject a pecuniary privilege that was offered, in lieu of the other that is taken off.

We have gratefully accepted the provincial elective assemblies, but have united on such alterations as will invigorate them. M. de Calonne had made a mixture of democracy and despotism which did annihilate those checks and gradations that are necessary evils, wherever there is a king. But I think the provincial assemblies, as they are proposed by us, may lay a foundation for a good building.

Several plans for the removal of internal Custom offices, for the free exportation of corn, for the change in the salt tax, for the annihilation of some duties, and now for the disposal of the king's domanial possessions, have been examined, and underwent several alterations. To some we have only left the

titles of the chapters, but changed them, in my opinion, much for the better.

The idea of a general tax in kind, was proposed by the government, but we said it was not practicable. As to any new imposition, we have answered, it is impossible to form an opinion before we know the return of the exports of the two last years, and the plans of economy that are intended. We have not, it is true, any powers from the nation, but our opinion is asked, and in a measure has become necessary, and a majority of us do not think their opinion can be given, until those preliminaries are fulfilled.

There is a very interesting contrast between the king's power at Versailles, and the opposition of that Assembly which is held there, and divided in seven committees of twenty, or twenty-two each, presided by a prince of the blood. Hitherto we have not voted in a General Assembly, although we had some to hear the Minister. But the opinions of the committees only are now taken, and in the end each vote will be pronounced in the whole house, beginning from the last up to the first in rank. You know that we have the Clergy, Magistracy, Noblesse, and Tiers Etat.

At the last meeting we had before the recess of these holidays, I had a personal battle of some importance. The king's domanial property has been a pretence to lavish money on the princes of the blood, favorites, and the powerful people of the country. I had the day before moved for an examination of those bargains, wherein more than fifty millions have been thrown away. The great people being afraid of being found out, and particularly M. de Calonne, who is guilty of the most indecent depredation, thought they must intimidate me and the Bishop of Langres, M. de la Luzerne's brother, who had seconded my motion. They, in consequence of it, persuaded the king to have us told by his brother, our president, that such motions ought to be signed. Upon which, we signed the inclosed paper; and the bishop said, that after the rents, he would bring in some accounts, signed by him, of the bargain of sinecure, made by M. de Calonne.

The king was very angry with me; M. de Calonne, who had his confidence, intended signal revenge. I was preparing to support what I had said, when we suddenly heard that M. de Calonne had been dismissed. The keeper of the seal was also sent off. I am glad we got rid of M. de Calonne; and with his successor, who, unfortunately, is an old broken man, may improve the opportunity of this Assembly, and let us make useful arrangements.

Adieu, my dear Hamilton; my best respects wait on Mrs. Hamilton. Remember me to Gen. Knox, Wadsworth—all our friends, and particularly the good doctor.

Most affectionately yours,

LA FAYETTE.

P. S. Don't tell the French Chargé d'Affairs that you have this paper from me, except that there is nothing in it, for topics have spread every *where*.

HAMILTON TO WASHINGTON.

NEW-YORK, July 3, 1787.

DEAR SIR:

In my passage through the Jerseys, and since my arrival here, I have taken particular pains to discover the public sentiment, and I am more and more convinced that this is the critical opportunity for establishing the prosperity of this country on a solid foundation. I have conversed with men of information, not only of this city, but from different parts of the State; and they agree that there has been an astonishing revolution for the better in the minds of the people.

The prevailing apprehension among thinking men is, that the Convention, from the fear of shocking the popular opinion, will not go far enough. They seem to be convinced, that a strong, well-mounted government will better suit the popular palate, than one of a different complexion. Men in office are, indeed, taking all possible pains to give an unfavorable impression of the Con-

vention; but the current seems to be moving strongly the other way.

A plain, but sensible man, in a conversation I had with him yesterday, expressed himself nearly in this manner:—The people begin to be convinced that "their excellent form of government," as they have been used to call it, will not answer their purpose, and that they must substitute something not very remote from that which they have lately quitted.

These appearances, though they will not warrant a conclusion that the people are yet ripe for such a plan as I advocate, yet serve to prove that there is no reason to despair of their adopting one equally energetic, if the Convention should think proper to propose it. They serve to prove that we ought not to allow too much weight to objections drawn from the supposed repugnance of the people to an efficient constitution. I confess, I am more and more inclined to believe, that former habits of thinking are regaining their influence with more rapidity than is generally imagined.

Not having compared ideas with you, sir, I cannot judge how far our sentiments agree; but, as I persuade myself, the genuineness of my representations will receive credit with you. My anxiety for the event of the deliberations of the Convention, induces me to make this communication of what appears to be the tendency of the public mind.

I own to you, sir, that I am seriously and deeply distressed at the aspect of the counsels which prevailed when I left Philadelphia. I fear that we shall let slip the golden opportunity of rescuing the American Empire from disunion, anarchy, and misery.

No motley or feeble measure can answer the end, or will finally receive the public support. Decision is true wisdom, and will be not less reputable to the Convention, than salutary to the community.

I shall of necessity remain here ten or twelve days. If I have reason to believe that my attendance at Philadelphia will not be mere waste of time, I shall, after that period, rejoin the Convention.

A. HAMILTON.

WASHINGTON TO HAMILTON.

PHILADELPHIA, 10th July, 1787.

DEAR SIR:

I thank you for your communication of the 3d. When I refer you to the state of the councils which prevailed at the period you left this city, and add that they are now, if possible, in a worse train than ever; you will find but little ground on which the hope of a good establishment can be formed. In a word, I *almost* despair of seeing a favorable issue to the proceedings of the Convention, and do, therefore, repent having any agency in the business.

The men who oppose a strong and energetic government are in my opinion narrow-minded politicians, or are under the influence of local views. The apprehension expressed by them, that the *people* will not accede to the form proposed, is the *ostensible*, not the *real*, cause of the opposition; but admitting that the *present* sentiment is as they prognosticate, the question ought nevertheless to be, is it or is it not the best form? If the former, recommend it, and it will assuredly obtain, maugre opposition.

I am sorry you went away; I wish you were back. The crisis is equally important and alarming, and no opposition under such circumstances should discourage exertions, till the signature is fixed. I will not at this time trouble you with more than my best wishes and sincere regards.

I am, dear Sir,

Your obedient servant,

G. WASHINGTON.

Alexander Hamilton, Esq.

HAMILTON TO ————

NEW-YORK, ——, 1787.

DEAR SIR:

Agreeably to what passed between us, I have had an interview with Mr. Auldjo, and I flatter myself if there is (as I doubt not there will be) as much moderation on the part of Major

Peirce as there appears to be on that of Mr. Auldjo, that the affair between them may yet be amicably terminated.

But Mr. Auldjo observes, I confess in my opinion with propriety, that he ought to know with some precision the matters which have given offence to Major Peirce, before he can enter into explanations; which he declares himself to be very ready to do with coolness and candor, the moment he shall be enabled to do it by a specification of the subjects of complaint. If a personal interview is for any reason disagreeable to Major Peirce, I entreat you, my dear sir, to obtain from him, and to communicate to me by letter, the substance of what has occasioned his dissatisfaction, with so much particularity only as will put it in the power of Mr. Auldjo to give an explicit answer. Major Peirce will, I hope, have no scruples about this, for as the door of explanation has been opened by Mr. Auldjo, there is no punctilio which stands in his way; and I trust he will feel the force of a sentiment which prudence and humanity equally dictate, that extremities ought then only to ensue when, after a fair experiment, accommodation has been found impracticable. An attention to this principle interests the characters of both the gentlemen concerned, and with them our own; and from every other consideration, as well as that of personal friendship to the parties, I sincerely wish to give it its full operation. I am convinced you are not less anxious to effect this than myself, and I trust our joint endeavors will not prove unsuccessful.

I remain with sincere regard,

Dear Sir, your obedient servant,

ALEX. HAMILTON.

I cannot, however, conclude without making one remark. Though Mr. Auldjo has expressed and still entertains a desire of explanation, it would ill become him to solicit it. Whatever, therefore, in my expressions may seem to urge such an explanation with the earnestness of entreaty, must be ascribed to my own feelings, and to that inclination which every man of sensibility must feel, not to see extremities take place if it be in his

power to prevent them, or until they become an absolutely necessary sacrifice to public opinion.

I remain with sincere regard,

Dear Sir, your obedient servant,

A. HAMILTON.

HAMILTON TO AULDJO.

NEW-YORK, July 26, 1787.

SIR:

I have delivered the paper you committed to me, as it stood altered, to Major Peirce, from whose conduct I am to conclude the affair between you is at an end. He informs me that he is shortly to set out on a jaunt up the North River.

As you intimate a wish to have my sentiments in writing on the transaction, I shall with pleasure declare that the steps you have taken in consequence of Mr. Peirce's challenge have been altogether in conformity to my opinion of what would be prudent, proper, and honorable on your part. They seem to have satisfied Mr. Peirce's scruples arising from what he apprehended in some particulars to have been your conduct to him, and I presume we are to hear nothing further of the matter.

I remain with great esteem, Sir,

Your obedient and humble servant,

ALEX. HAMILTON.

To Mr. Auldjo.

HAMILTON TO RUFUS KING.

NEW-YORK, August 20, 1787.

DEAR SIR:

Since my arrival here, I have written to my colleagues, informing them if either of them would come down, I would accompany him to Philadelphia; so much for the sake of propriety and public opinion.

In the mean time, if any material alteration should happen to be made in the plan now before the Convention, I will be obliged to you for a communication of it. I will also be obliged to you to let me know when your conclusion is at hand, for I would choose to be present at that time.

HAMILTON TO WADSWORTH.

August 20, 1787.

MY DEAR SIR:

The inclosed is said to be the copy of a letter circulating in your State. The history of its appearance among us is, that it was sent by one *Whitmore* of Stratford, formerly in the Paymaster General's office, to one James Reynolds of this city.

I am at a loss clearly to understand its object, and have some suspicion, that it has been fabricated to excite jealousy against the Convention, with a view to an opposition to their recommendations. At all events, I wish, if possible, to trace its source, and send it to you for that purpose.

Whitmore must of course say where he got it, and by pursuing the information we may at last come at the author. Let me know the political connections of this man, and the complexion of the people most active in the circulation of the letter. Be so good as to attend to this inquiry somewhat particularly, as I have different reasons of some moment for setting it on foot.

I remain, &c.

A. HAMILTON.

To Jeremiah Wadsworth.

COL. WADSWORTH TO HAMILTON.

HARTFORD, August 26, 1787.

MY DEAR SIR:

I received your favor this day, with the inclosed copy of a letter, said to be circulating in this State. Some time since a paragraph in the New Haven papers hinted at such a letter, and

appeared to be written to secure the Anti-federal party or alarm them. And I believed it was well intended, as it seemed to be meant to prepare them to comply with the doings of the Convention, lest worse befell them; but the close of the letter appears to be calculated for other purposes. Wetmore has always associated with men who wished well to America, and a good Government. He is half-brother to the spirited Federal writer in our papers, who signs himself Cato; and if he has really written or circulated the letter in question, I am quite at a loss to know his intentions. I have communicated this matter to Col. Humphreys, in confidence, who is on his way to New Haven, where Wetmore lives, though formerly of Hartford. He will inquire carefully into the matter, and write you. He has lived in the same town with Wetmore, and can easily fathom him. Wetmore is naturally sanguine, has some talents, and I believe, is enterprising, but fickle. Who the active people in this business are, I have yet to learn, as it certainly has not circulated hereabouts. But from Humphreys you may expect to know all that is true, in Wetmore's neighborhood. I have always been Humphreys' friend, but a nearer acquaintance with him convinces me he is a man of great integrity, and such talents as would wear well in any employment of confidence. If he comes to New-York I wish you to be more acquainted with him.

I am, dear Sir,
Your very humble servant,
JERH. WADSWORTH.

HAMILTON TO RUFUS KING.

NEW-YORK, August 28, 1787.

DEAR SIR:

I wrote you, some days since, to request you to inform me when there was a prospect of your finishing, as I intended to be with you, for certain reasons, before the conclusion.

It is whispered here, that some late changes in your scheme have taken place, which give it a higher tone. Is this the case? I leave town to-day to attend a circuit in a neighboring county, from which I shall return the last of the week, and shall be glad to find a line from you, explanatory of the period of the probable termination of your business.

COLONEL HUMPHREYS TO HAMILTON.

NEW HAVEN, Sept. 16, 1787.

MY DEAR SIR:

Our friend Col. Wadsworth has communicated to me a letter, in which you made inquiries respecting a political letter that has lately circulated in this State. I arrived in this town yesterday, and have since conversed with several intelligent persons on the subject. It appears to have been printed in a Fairfield paper as long ago as the 25th of July. I have not been able to trace it to its source. Mr. Wetmore informs me, that when he first saw this letter it was in the hands of one Jared Mansfield, who, I believe, has formerly been reputed a Loyalist. Indeed it seems to have been received and circulated with avidity by that class of people, whether it was fabricated by them or not. I think, however, there is little doubt that it was manufactured in this State. I demanded of Mr. Wetmore what he thought were the wishes and objects of the writer of that letter. He said, he believed it might be written principally for the amusement of the author, and perhaps with some view to learn whether the people were not absolutely indifferent to all government and dead to all political sentiment.

Before I saw the letter in question, a paragraph had been published by Mr. Meigs, giving an account of it, and attempting to excite the apprehensions of the Anti-federalists, with an idea, that the most disastrous consequences are to be expected, unless we shall accept the proceedings of the Convention. Some

think this was the real design of the fictitious performance, but others, with more reason, that it was intended to feel the public pulse, and to discover whether the public mind would be startled with propositions of Royalty. The quondam tories have undoubtedly conceived hopes of a future union with Great Britain, from the inefficacy of our Government, and the tumults which prevailed in Massachusetts during the last winter. I saw a letter, written at that period, by a Clergyman of considerable reputation in Nova Scotia, to a person of eminence in this State, stating the impossibility of our being happy under our present Constitution, and proposing (now we could think and argue calmly on all the consequences) that the efforts of the moderate, the virtuous, and the brave, should be exerted to effect a reunion with the parent State. He mentioned, among other things, how instrumental the Cincinnati might be, and how much it would redound to their emolument. It seems, by a conversation I have had here, that the ultimate practicability of introducing the Bishop of Osnaburgh is not a novel idea among those who were formerly termed Loyalists. Ever since the peace it has been occasionally talked of and wished for. Yesterday, where I dined, half jest—half earnest—he was given as the first toast.

I leave you now, my dear friend, to reflect how ripe we are for the most mad and ruinous project that can be suggested, especially when, in addition to this view, we take into consideration how thoroughly the patriotic part of the community—the friends of an efficient Government, are discouraged with the present system, and irritated at the popular demagogues who are determined to keep themselves in office, at the risk of every thing. Thence apprehensions are formed, that though the measures proposed by the Convention, may not be equal to the wishes of the most enlightened and virtuous, yet that they will be too high-toned to be adopted by our popular assemblies. Should that happen, our political ship will be left afloat on a sea of chance, without a rudder as well as without a pilot.

I am happy to see you have (some of you) had the honest boldness to attack in a public paper, the Anti-federal dogmas of a great personage in your State. Go on and prosper. Were the

men of talents and honesty, throughout the Continent, properly combined into one phalanx, I am confident they would be competent to hew their way through all opposition. Were there no little jealousies, bickerings and unworthy sinister views, to divert them from their object, they might by perseverance, establish a Government calculated to promote the happiness of mankind, and to make the Revolution a blessing instead of a curse.

I think it is probable that I shall soon go to the southward; in the mean time, I beg you to be persuaded that I am, with sentiments of sincere friendship and esteem,

My dear Hamilton,

Your most obedient and most humble serv't,

D. HUMPHREYS.

Col. Hamilton.

HAMILTON TO WASHINGTON.

1787.

DEAR SIR:

You probably saw, some time since, some animadversions on certain expressions of Governor Clinton, respecting the Convention. You may have seen a piece, signed "A Republican," attempting to bring the fact into question, and endeavoring to controvert the conclusions drawn from it, if true. My answer you will find in the inclosed. I trouble you with it merely from that anxiety, which is natural to every man, to have his veracity at least stand in a fair light. The matter seems to be given up by the Governor, and the fact, with the inferences from it, stand against him in full force, and operate as they ought to do.

It is, however, of some importance to the party to diminish whatever credit or influence I may possess, and to effect this, they stick at nothing. Among many contemptible artifices practised by them, they have had recourse to an insinuation, that I *palmed* myself upon you, and that you *dismissed* me from your family. This I confess hurts my feelings, and if it obtains credit, will require a contradiction.

You, sir, will undoubtedly recollect the manner in which I came into your family, and went out of it; and know how destitute of foundation such insinuations are. My confidence in your justice will not permit me to doubt your readiness to put the matter in its true light in your answer to this letter. It cannot be my wish to give any complexion to the affair which might excite the least scruple in you; but I confess it would mortify me to lie under the imputation, either of having obtruded myself into the family of a General, or of having been turned out of it.

The new Constitution is as popular in this city as it is possible for any thing to be, and the prospect thus far is favorable to it throughout the State. But there is no saying what turn things may take when the full flood of official influence is let loose against it. This is to be expected; for though the Governor has not publicly declared himself, his particular connections and confidential friends are loud against it.

Mrs. Hamilton joins in respectful compliments to Mrs. Washington.

I remain with perfect esteem,
Your Excellency's obedient servant,
A. HAMILTON.

LA FAYETTE TO HAMILTON.

PARIS, October 15, 1787.

MY DEAR HAMILTON:

While you have been attending your most important Convention, debates were also going on in France respecting the constitutional rights, and matters of that kind. Grave reforms are taking place at court. The parliaments are remonstrating, and our provincial assemblies begin to pop out. Amidst many things that were not much to the purpose, some good principles have been laid out; and, although our affairs have a proper arrangement, the nation will not in the last be the loser. The prime minister is a man of candor, honesty, and abilities. But

now the rumor of war sets us a-going. Not that France is wishing for it, and Great Britain ought to be satisfied with an advantageous treaty of commerce, and the profit of hers and Prussia's treachery in Holland. But, while I consider the madness of the Turks, the movements of the Imperial Court, the folly of his Prussian Majesty, the late catastrophe in Holland, and the cry of England for war, I hardly think that the peaceful dispositions of this ministry—and, they say, of Mr. Pitt—will be able to extinguish a fire that is catching in every corner of Europe. It would be consistent with my inclination and best views that America be engaged in an active co-operation. But as I do not think it consistent with her interest, I have taken the liberty to express my ideas in an official letter to Mr. Jay, to whom I refer you. It seems to me, that a friendly, helping neutrality, would be useful to France, profitable to the United States, and perfectly safe on the footing of the treaties. Should America be forced to war, I wish it would be for the last campaign—time enough to occupy Canada and Newfoundland. But I see no inconvenience in privateering with French letters of marque.

Inclosed is the journal of a preliminary assembly in Auvergne. I am returning there as soon as we have done some arrangements respecting American commerce, which will result on as good footing in this kingdom as it is for the moment possible. The ministry are more favorably disposed.

I hope you will be satisfied with Count de Maurice and the Countess de Brehan, his sister-in-law. I beg leave to introduce them both to you and Mrs. Hamilton, to whom I offer my most affectionate regards. Remember me to the rest of the family and all friends. My best compliments wait on Gen. Schuyler and the doctor. Adieu, my good friend. The post is going to town. I have only time to tell that I am ever

Your most affectionate friend,

LA FAYETTE.

WASHINGTON TO HAMILTON.

MOUNT VERNON, October 18, 1787.

DEAR SIR:

Your favor, without date, came to my hand by the last post. It is with unfeigned concern I perceive that a political dispute has arisen between Gov. Clinton and yourself. For both of you I have the highest esteem and regard. But as you say it is insinuated by some of your political adversaries, and may obtain credit, "that you *palmed* yourself upon me and was *dismissed* from my family," and call upon me to do you justice by a recital of the facts; I do, therefore, explicitly declare, that both charges are entirely unfounded. With respect to the first, I have no cause to believe that you took a single step to accomplish, or had the most distant idea of receiving an appointment in my family till you were invited thereto. And with respect to the second, that your quitting it was altogether the effect of your own choice.

When the situation of this country calls loudly for unanimity and vigor, it is to be lamented that gentlemen of talent and character should disagree in their sentiments for promoting the public weal; but unfortunately this ever has been, and more than probable ever will be, the case in the affairs of man.

Having scarcely been from home since my return from Philadelphia, I can give but little information with respect to the *general* reception of the new constitution in *this* State. In Alexandria, however, and some of the adjacent counties, it has been embraced with an enthusiastic warmth of which I had no conception. I expect, notwithstanding, violent opposition will be given to it by *some* characters of weight and influence in the State.

Mrs. Washington unites with me in sending her best wishes for Mrs. Hamilton and yourself.

I am, dear Sir,

Your most obedient and affectionate friend,

G. WASHINGTON.

HAMILTON TO WASHINGTON.

October 30, 1787.

I am much obliged to your Excellency for the explicit manner in which you contradict the insinuations mentioned in my last letter. The only use I shall make of your answer will be to put it into the hands of a few friends.

The constitution proposed has in this State warm friends, and warm enemies. The first impressions every where are in its favor; but the artillery of its opponents makes some impression. The event cannot yet be foreseen. The inclosed is the first number of a series of papers to be written in its defence.

I send you also, at the request of the Baron De Steuben, a printed pamphlet, containing the grounds of an application lately made to Congress. He tells me there is some reference to you, the object of which he does not himself seem clearly to understand; but imagines it may be in your power to be of service to him.

There are public considerations that induce me to be somewhat anxious for his success. He is fortified with materials, which, in Europe, could not fail to establish the belief of the contract he alleges. The documents of service he possesses are of a nature to convey an exalted idea of them. The compensations he has received, though considerable, if compared with those which have been received by American officers, will, according to European ideas, be very scanty in application to a stranger who is acknowledged to have rendered essential services. Our reputation abroad is not at present too high. To dismiss an old soldier empty and hungry, to seek the bounty of those on whom he has no claims, and to complain of unkind returns and violated engagements, will certainly not tend to raise it. I confess, too, there is something in my feelings which would incline me in this case to go farther than might be strictly necessary, rather than drive a man, at the Baron's time of life, who has been a faithful servant, to extremities. And this is unavoidable if he does not succeed in his present attempt. What

he asks would, all calculations made, terminate in this, an allowance of his five hundred and eighty guineas a year. He only wishes a recognition of the contract. He knows that until affairs mend no money can be produced. I do not know how far it may be in your power to do him any good; but I shall be mistaken if the considerations I have mentioned do not appear to your Excellency to have some weight.

I remain, with great respect and esteem,

Your Excellency's obedient servant,

A. HAMILTON.

His Excellency General Washington.

WASHINGTON TO HAMILTON.

MOUNT VERNON, November 10, 1787.

DEAR SIR:

I thank you for the pamphlet, and for the Gazette, contained in your letter of the 30th ult. For the remaining numbers of Publius, I shall acknowledge myself obliged, as I am persuaded the subject will be well handled by the author.

The new constitution has, as the public prints will have informed you, been handed to the people of this State by a unanimous vote of the Assembly, but it is not to be inferred from hence that its opponents are silenced. On the contrary there are many, and some powerful ones—some of whom, it is said, by *overshooting* the mark, have lessened their weight; be this as it may, their assiduity stands unrivalled, whilst the friends to the constitution content themselves with barely avowing their approbation of it. Thus stands the matter with us at present, yet my opinion is that the major voice is favorable.

Application has been made to me by Mr. Secretary Thompson (by order of Congress), for a copy of the report of a committee, which was appointed to confer with the Baron De Steuben, on his first arrival in this country, forwarded to me by Mr. President Laurens. This I have accordingly sent. It throws

no other light on the subject than such as is to be derived from the disinterested conduct of the Baron. No terms are made by him, "nor will he accept of any thing but with general approbation." I have, however, in my letter inclosing this report to the Secretary, taken occasion to express an unequivocal wish that Congress would reward the Baron for his services, sacrifices, and merits, to his entire satisfaction. It is the only way in which I could bring my sentiments before that honorable body, as it has been an established principle with me, to ask nothing from it.

With very great esteem and regard,
I am, dear Sir,
Your most obedient servant,
G. WASHINGTON.

HAMILTON TO JAMES MADISON, JUNR.

NEW-YORK, April 3, 1788.

I have been very delinquent, my dear sir, in not thanking you for your letter from Philadelphia. The remarks you made on a certain subject are important, and will be attended to.

There is truly much embarrassment in the case.

I think, however, the principles we have talked of, are not only just, but will apply to the other departments. Nor will the consequences appear so disagreeable as they may seem at first sight, when we attend to the true import of the rule established. The States *retain* all the authorities they were before possessed of, not alienated in the three modes pointed out; but this does not include cases which are the creatures of the new Constitution. For instance, the crime of treason against the United States *immediately* is a crime known only to the new Constitution. There of course *was* no power in the State constitutions to pardon that crime. There will therefore be none under the new, &c. This is something like, it seems to me, to afford the best solution of the difficulty. I send you the Federalist from

the beginning to the conclusion of the commentary on the Executive Branch. If our suspicions of the author be right, he must be too much engaged to make a rapid progress in what remains. The Court of Chancery and a Circuit Court are now sitting.

We are told that your election has succeeded, with which we all felicitate ourselves. I will thank you for an account of the result generally. In this State our prospects are much as you left them. A moot point which side will prevail. Our friends to the northward are active.

I remain,

Your affectionate obedient servant,

A. HAMILTON.

HAMILTON TO MADISON.

May, 4, 1788.

MY DEAR SIR:

I believe I am in your debt a letter or two, which is owing to my occupation in relation to the elections, &c.

These are now over in this State, but the result is not known. All depends upon Albany, where both sides claim the victory. Our doubts will not be removed till the latter end of the month. I hope your expectations of Virginia have not diminished.

Respecting the first volume of Publius I have executed your commands. The books have been sent addressed to the care of Governor Randolph. The second, we are informed, will be out in the course of a week, and an equal number shall be forwarded. Inclosed is a letter, committed to my care by Mr. Vanderkemp, which I forward with pleasure.

Believe me, with great attachment,

Yours,

A. HAMILTON.

HAMILTON TO GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

NEW-YORK, May 19, 1788.

MY DEAR SIR:

I acknowledge my delinquency in not thanking you before for your obliging letter from Richmond. But the truth is, that I have been so overwhelmed in avocations of one kind or another, that I have scarcely had a moment to spare to a friend. You, I trust, will be the less disposed to be inexorable, as I hope you will believe there is no one for whom I have more inclination than yourself—I mean of the *male* kind.

Your account of the situation of Virginia was interesting, and the present appearances, as represented here, justify your conjectures. It does not, however, appear that the adoption of the constitution can be considered as out of doubt in that State. Its conduct upon the occasion will certainly be of critical importance.

In this State, as far as we can judge, the elections have gone wrong. The event, however, will not certainly be known till the end of the month. Violence, rather than moderation, is to be looked for from the opposite party. Obstinacy seems the prevailing trait in the character of its leader. The language is, that if all the other States adopt, this is to persist in refusing the constitution. It is reduced to a certainty, that Clinton has in several conversations declared the *Union* unnecessary; though I have the information through channels which do not permit a public use to be made of it.

We have, notwithstanding this unfavorable complexion of things, two sources of hope—one, the chance of a ratification by nine States, before we decide, and the influence of this upon the firmness of the *followers;* the other, the probability of a change of sentiment in the people, auspicious to the Constitution.

The current has been for some time running towards it; though the whole flood of official influence, accelerated by a torrent of falsehood, early gave the public opinion so violent a direction in a wrong channel, that it was not possible suddenly to alter its course. This is a mighty stiff simile; but you know

what I mean; and after having started it, I did not choose to give up the chase.

Adieu. Yours sincerely,

A. HAMILTON.

The members of the Convention in this city, by a majority of nine or ten to one, will be:—John Jay, Robert R. Livingston, Richard Morris, John Sloss Hobart, James Duane, Isaac Rosevelt, Richard Harrison, Nicholas Low, Alexander Hamilton.

G. Morris, Esq.

HAMILTON TO MADISON.

NEW-YORK, May 19, 1788.

Some days since, I wrote to you, my dear sir, inclosing a letter from a Mr. Vanderkemp, &c.

I then mentioned to you that the question of a majority for or against the Constitution, would depend upon the County of Albany. By the later accounts from that quarter, I fear much that the issue there has been against us.

As Clinton is truly the leader of his party, and is inflexibly obstinate, I count little on overcoming opposition by reason. Our only chances will be the previous ratification by nine States, which may shake the firmness of his followers; and a change in the sentiments of the people, which have, for some time, been travelling towards the Constitution, though the first impressions, made by every species of influence and artifice, were too strong to be eradicated in time to give a decisive turn to the elections. We shall leave nothing undone to cultivate a favorable disposition in the citizens at large.

The language of the Anti-federalists is, that if all the other States adopt, New-York ought still to hold out. I have the most direct intelligence, but in a manner which forbids a public use being made of it, that Clinton has, in several conversations, declared his opinion of the *inutility* of the UNION. It is an unhappy reflection, that the friends to it should, by quarrelling for straws among themselves, promote the designs of its adversaries.

We think here that the situation of your State is critical. Let me know what you now think of it. I believe you meet nearly at the time we do. It will be of vast importance that an exact communication should be kept up between us at that period; and the moment *any decisive* question is taken, if favorable, I request you to dispatch an express to me with pointed orders to make all possible diligence, by changing horses, &c. All expense shall be thankfully and liberally paid. I executed your commands respecting the first volume of the Federalist. I sent forty of the common copies and twelve of the finer ones, addressed to the care of Governor Randolph. The printer announces the second volume in a day or two, when an equal number of the two kinds shall also be forwarded. He informs that the Judicial Department—Trial by Jury—Bill of Rights, &c., is discussed in some additional papers which have not yet appeared in the Gazettes.

I remain,

With great sincerity and attachment,

Yours,

A. HAMILTON.

James Madison.

HAMILTON TO MADISON.

NEW-YORK, June 8, 1788.

MY DEAR SIR:

In my last, I think, I informed you that the elections had turned out, beyond expectation, favorable to the Anti-federal party. They have a majority of two-thirds in the Convention, and, according to the best estimate I can form, of about four-sevenths in the community. The views of the leaders in this city are pretty well ascertained to be turned towards a *long* adjournment; say, till next spring or summer. Their incautious ones observe, that this will give an opportunity to the State to *see how* the government works, and to act according to *circumstances*.

My reasonings on the fact are to this effect: The leaders of the party hostile to the Constitution are equally hostile to the Union. They are, however, afraid to reject the Constitution at

once, because that step would bring matters to a crisis between this State and the States which had adopted the Constitution, and between the parties in the State. A separation of the Southern District from the other parts of the State, it is perceived, would become the object of the Federalists, and of the neighboring States. They therefore resolve upon a long adjournment, as the safest and most artful course to effect their final purpose. They suppose, that when the Government gets into operation, it will be obliged to take some steps in respect to revenue, &c., which will furnish topics of declamation to its enemies in the several States, and will strengthen the minorities. If any considerable discontent should show itself, they will stand ready to head the opposition. If, on the contrary, the thing should go on smoothly, and the sentiments of our own people should change, they can elect to come into the Union. They at all events take the chances of time and the chapter of accidents.

How far their friends in the country will go with them, I am not able to say, but, as they have always been found very obsequious, we have little reason to calculate upon an uncompliant temper in the present instance. For my own part, the more I can penetrate the views of the Anti-federal party in this State, the more I dread the consequences of the non-adoption of the Constitution by any of the other States—the more I fear an eventual disunion, and civil war. God grant that Virginia may accede. The example will have a vast influence on our politics. New Hampshire, all accounts give us to expect, will be an assenting State.

The number of the volumes of the Federalist which you desired, have been forwarded, as well the second as the first, to the care of Governor Randolph. It was impossible to correct a certain error.

In a former letter, I requested you to communicate to me, by express, the event of any decisive question in favor of the Constitution, authorizing changes of horses, &c., with an assurance to the person that he will be liberally paid for his diligence.

A. HAMILTON.

James Madison.

MADISON TO HAMILTON.

RICHMOND, June 9, 1788.

DEAR SIR:

The heat of the weather, &c., has laid me up with a bilious attack: I am not able, therefore, to say more than a few words.

No material indications have taken place since my last. The chance at present seems to be in our favor. But it is possible things may take another turn. Oswald of Philadelphia came here on Saturday; and has closet interviews with the leaders of the opposition.

Yours, affectionately,

J. MADISON.

Alex. Hamilton, Esq.

RUFUS KING TO HAMILTON.

BOSTON, June 12, 1788.

DEAR SIR:

I have made an arrangement to forward by express the result of the Convention of New Hampshire to Springfield, in this State, from which place Gen. Knox has engaged a conveyance to you at Poughkeepsie. Those who are best informed of the situation of the question, in New Hampshire, are positive that the decision will be such as we wish, and from the particular parts which I have heard, I can entertain no fear of a disappointment from that quarter. The accession of New Hampshire will present the subject to your Convention in a new, and indeed, an extraordinary light. I think your opponents, powerful as they may be, will be greatly perplexed, although they may outnumber you, and a small majority of the people of the State may be on their side, yet I cannot think they will have the hardiness to negative the question.

You may pronounce, with the utmost confidence, that the decision of our Convention has proved entirely satisfactory to

our people. I have made a business of conversing with men from all parts of the State, and am completely satisfied that the Constitution is highly popular; that its opponents are now very few, and those few hourly diminishing. Be assured that the organization of the Government (by *nine States*, is considered as certain), although a subject of delicacy, is most earnestly desired, and from the conversation of both yeoman and politician, I am persuaded, that the people of Massachusetts are sufficiently mature and firm, to execute, so far as depends on them, what shall be proper as good subjects of the new Government.

Farewell.

Yours, &c.,

RUFUS KING.

Col. A. Hamilton.

Pray mention to Knox that I should have written to him had I not supposed him on his way here.

MADISON TO HAMILTON.

RICHMOND, June 16, 1788.

DEAR SIR:

Yours of the 8th has just come to hand. I mentioned in my last that Oswald had been here in consultation with the Antifederal leaders. The contents of your letter confirm the idea that a requisition for delay is on foot between the opposition here and with you. We have conjectured for some days, that the policy is to spin out the session, in order to receive overtures from your Convention; or, if that cannot be, to weary the members into an adjournment, without taking any decision. It is presumed, at the same time, that they do not despair of carrying the point of previous amendments, which is preferable game. The parties continue to be nearly balanced. If we have a majority at all, it does not exceed three or four. If we lose it,

Kentucke will be the cause; they are generally, if not unanimously against us.

I have been partially recovered since my last, but to-day have a sort of relapse. My health is not good, and the business is wearisome beyond expression. I wish you every happiness, and

Am yours,
J. MADISON, JR.

H. LEE TO HAMILTON.

1788.

MY DEAR SIR:

God bless you and your efforts to save me from the manifold ——— misfortunes which have and continue to oppress me, whenever I attempt to aid human nature. You will do what you think best, and whatever you do I will confirm. * * * * has acted the part of a decided rascal, and if I fail in my right, I may not in personal revenge.

Our Convention is in full debate on the great business of the Federal Constitution. We possess, as yet, in defiance of great overtures, a majority, but very small indeed.

A correspondence has certainly been opened through a Mr. O. of Philadelphia, from the malcontents of P. and N. Y. to us. It has its operation, but I believe we are still safe, unless the question of adjournment be introduced, and love of home may induce some of our friends to abandon their principles.

Adieu,
H. LEE.

MADISON TO HAMILTON.

RICHMOND, June 20, 1788.

DEAR SIR:

Our debates have advanced as far as the judiciary department, against which a great effort is making. The appellate cognizance of fact, and an extension of the power to causes between

citizens of different States, with some lesser objections, are the topics chiefly dwelt on. The retrospection to cases antecedent to the Constitution, such as British debts, and an apprehended revival of the Fairfax, Indiana, Vandalia, &c., claims, are also brought into view in all the terrific colors which imagination can give them. A few days more will probably produce a decision, though it is surmised, that something is expected from your Convention in consequence of the mission formerly suggested to you. Delay and an adjournment will be tried, if the adverse party find their numbers inferior, and can prevail on themselves to remain here till the other side can be wearied into that mode of relieving themselves. At present, it is calculated, that we still retain a majority of three or four; and if we can weather the storm against the part under consideration, I shall hold the danger to be pretty well over. There is nevertheless a very disagreeable uncertainty in the case; and the more so, as there is a possibility that our present strength may be miscalculated.

Yours, affectionately,

J. MADISON, JR.

HAMILTON TO MADISON.

POUGHKEEPSIE, June, 1788.

DEAR SIR:

Your letter of the 20th came to hand two days since. I regret that your prospects are not yet reduced to greater certainty. There is more and more reason to believe that our conduct will be influenced by yours.

Our discussions have not yet travelled beyond the power of taxation. To-day we shall probably quit this ground to pass to another. Our arguments confound, but do not convince. Some of the leaders, however, appear to be convinced by *circumstances*, and to be desirous of a retreat. This does not apply to the chief, who wishes to establish Clintonism on the basis of Anti-federalism.

I remain affectionately yours,

A. HAMILTON.

HAMILTON TO MADISON.

POUGHKEEPSIE, June 21, 1788.

Yesterday, my dear sir, the Convention made a House. That day and this have been spent in preliminary arrangements. To-morrow, we go into a committee of the whole on the Constitution. There is every appearance that a full discussion will take place, which will keep us together at least a fortnight. It is not easy to conjecture what will be the result. Our adversaries greatly outnumber us. The leaders gave indications of a pretty desperate disposition in private conversations previous to the meeting; but I imagine the minor partisans have their scruples, and an air of moderation is now assumed. So far the thing is not despaired of. A happy issue with you must have considerable influence upon us. I have time to add nothing more than the assurances of my sincere attachment.

A. HAMILTON.

HAMILTON TO MADISON.

POUGHKEEPSIE, June 21, 1788.

MY DEAR SIR:

I thank you for your letter of the 9th instant, and am glad to learn that you think the chance is in your favor. I hope no disagreeable change may appear. Yet, I own I fear something from your indisposition.

Our debate here began on the clause respecting the proportion of representation, &c., which has taken up two days. To-morrow, I imagine, we shall talk about the power over elections. The only good information I can give you is, that we shall be some time together, and take the chance of events.

The object of the party at present is undoubtedly conditional amendments. What effect events may have cannot precisely be foreseen. I believe the adoption by New Hampshire is certain.

Yours, affectionately,

A. HAMILTON.

MADISON TO HAMILTON.

RICHMOND, June 22, 1788.

DEAR SIR:

The Judiciary Department has been on the anvil for several days, and I presume will still be a further subject of disquisition. The attacks on it have apparently made less impression than was feared. But they may be secretly felt by particular interests that could not make the acknowledgment, and we choose to ground their vote against the Constitution in other motives. In the course of this week we hope for a close of the business in some form or other. The opponents will probably bring forward a bill of rights, with sundry other amendments, as conditions of ratification. Should these fail, or be despaired of, an adjournment will, I think, be attempted. And in case of disappointment here also, some predict a secession. I do not myself concur in the last apprehension, though I have thought it prudent to withhold, by a studied fairness in every step on the side of the Constitution, every pretext for rash experiments. The plan meditated by the friends of the Constitution is to preface the ratification with some plain and general truths that cannot affect the validity of the act, and to subjoin a recommendation, which may hold up amendments as objects to be pursued in the constitutional mode. These expedients are rendered prudent by the nice balance of numbers, and the scruples entertained by some who are in general well affected. Whether they will secure us a majority, I dare not positively to declare. Our calculations promise us success by three or four, or possibly five or six votes. But were there no possibility of mistaking the opinions of some, in reviewing those of so many, the smallness of the majority suggests the danger from ordinary casualties, which may vary the result. It unluckily happens that our legislature, which meets at this place to-morrow, consists of a considerable majority of Antifederal members. This is another circumstance that ought to check our confidence. As individuals they may have some influence; and, as coming immediately from the people at large, they

can give any color they please to the popular sentiments at this moment, and may in that mode throw a bias on the representatives of the people in Convention.

Yours, affectionately,

J. MADISON, JR.

HAMILTON TO MADISON.

POUGHKEEPSIE, Friday morning, June 27, 1788.

A day or two ago, General Schuyler, at my request, sent forward to you an express with an account of the adoption of the Constitution by New Hampshire. We eagerly wait for further intelligence from you, as our chance of success depends upon you. There are some slight symptoms of relaxation in some of the leaders, which authorizes a gleam of hope, if you do well, but certainly I think not otherwise.

A. HAMILTON.

To Hon. James Madison, Jr.

MADISON TO HAMILTON.

RICHMOND, June 27, 1788.

MY DEAR SIR:

This day put an end to the existence of our Convention. The inclosed is a copy of the Act of Ratification. It has been followed by a number of recommendatory alterations, many of them highly objectionable. One of the most so is an article prohibiting direct taxes where effectual laws shall be passed by the States for the purpose. It was impossible to prevent this error. The minority will sign an address to the people. The genius of it is unknown to me. It is announced as an exhortation to acquiesce in the result of the Convention. Notwithstanding the

fair propositions made by some, I am so uncharitable as to suspect, that the ill-will to the Constitution will produce every peaceable effort to disgrace and destroy it. Mr. Henry declared, previous to the final question, that although he should submit as a quiet citizen, he should wait with impatience for the favorable moment of regaining, in a *constitutional way*, the lost liberties of his country. My conjecture is, that exertions will be made to engage two-thirds of the legislatures in the task of regularly undermining the Government. This hint may not be unworthy of your attention.

Yours, affectionately,

J. MADISON, JR.

MADISON TO HAMILTON.

June 31, 1788.

Inclosed is the final result of our conventional deliberations. The intended address of the minority proved to be of a nature apprehended by me. It was rejected by the party themselves, when proposed to them, and produced an auspicious conclusion to the business. As I shall set out in a few days for New-York, I postpone further explanations. I have this instant the communications from New Hampshire via Poughkeepsie; also, your two favors of the 19th and 20th.

Yours, affectionately,

J. MADISON, JR.

HAMILTON TO MADISON.

July 8, 1788.

MY DEAR SIR:

I felicitate you sincerely on the event in Virginia, but my satisfaction will be allayed if I discover too much facility in the business of amendment-making. I fear the system will be

wounded in some of its vital parts by too general a concurrence in some very injudicious recommendations. I allude more particularly to the power of taxation. The more I consider *requisition* in any shape, the more I am out of humor with it. We yesterday passed through the Constitution. To-day some definitive proposition is to be brought forward, but what we are at a loss to judge. We have good reason to believe that our opponents are not agreed, and this affords some ground of hope. Different things are thought of—*conditions precedent*, or previous amendments; *conditions subsequent*, or the proposition of amendments, upon condition that if they are not adopted within a limited time, the State shall be at liberty to *withdraw* from the Union; and lastly, *recommendatory amendments*. In either case, *constructive declarations* will be carried as far as possible. We will go as far as we can in the latter without invalidating the act, and will concur in rational recommendations. The rest for our opponents. We are informed there has been a disturbance in the city of Albany, on the 4th of July, which has occasioned bloodshed. The Anti-federalists were the aggressors, and the Federalists the victors. Thus stand our accounts at present. We trust, however, the matter has passed over, and tranquillity been restored.

Yours, affectionately,

A. HAMILTON.

HAMILTON TO MADISON.

POUGHKEEPSIE, Saturday, July, 1788.

I thank you, my dear sir, for yours by the post. Yesterday, I communicated to Duer our situation, which I presume he will have communicated to you. It remains exactly the same. No further question having been taken, I fear the footing I mentioned to Duer is the best upon which it can be placed; but every thing possible will yet be attempted to bring the party from that stand to an unqualified ratification. Let me know your idea upon the possibility of our being received on that plan. You will understand that the only qualification will be the

reservation of a right to recede, in case our amendments have not been decided upon in one of the modes pointed out by the Constitution within a certain number of years, perhaps five or seven. If this can in the first instance be admitted as a ratification, I do not fear any further consequences. Congress will, I presume, recommend certain amendments to render the *structure* of the Government more secure. This will satisfy the more considerate and honest opposers of the Constitution, and with the aid of them will break up the party.

Yours, affectionately,

A. HAMILTON.

MADISON TO HAMILTON.

NEW-YORK, Sunday evening.

MY DEAR SIR:

Yours, of yesterday, is this instant come to hand, and I have but a few minutes to answer it. I am sorry that your situation obliges you to listen to propositions of the nature you describe. My opinion is, that a reservation of a right to withdraw, if amendments be not decided on under the form of the Constitution within a certain time, is a *conditional* ratification; that it does not make New-York a member of the new Union, and consequently that she could not be received on that plan. Compacts must be reciprocal—this principle would not in such a case be preserved. The Constitution requires an adoption *in toto* and *for ever*. It has been so adopted by the other States. An adoption for a limited time would be as defective as an adoption of some of the articles only. In short, any *condition* whatever must vitiate the ratification. What the new Congress, by virtue of the power to admit new States, may be *able* and disposed to do in such case, I do not inquire, as I suppose that is not the material point at present. I have not a moment to add more than my fervent wishes for your success and happiness. The idea of reserving a right to withdraw was started at Richmond, and considered as a conditional ratification, which was itself abandoned as worse than a rejection. Yours,

JAMES MADISON, JR.

CHIPMAN TO HAMILTON.

TINMOUTH, July 14, 1788.

SIR:

Your character as a federalist has induced me, although, personally unknown to you, to address you on a subject of very great importance to the State of Vermont, of which I am a citizen, and from which I think may be derived a considerable advantage to the federal cause. Ten States have now adopted the new federal plan of government. That it will now succeed is beyond a doubt; what disputes the other States may occasion I know not. The people of this State, could certain obstacles be removed, I believe, might be induced almost unanimously to throw themselves into the federal scale. You are not unacquainted with the situation of a considerable part of our landed property. Many grants were formerly made by the government of New-York, of lands within this territory while under that jurisdiction. On the assumption of government by the people of this State, the same lands, partly, it is said, for want of information respecting the true situation of these grants, and partly from the opinion prevailing with our then leaders, that the New-York grants within this territory were of no validity, have been granted to others under the authority of this State.

It is now generally believed that, should we be received into the Union, the New-York grants would, in the federal courts, be preferred to those of Vermont. The Legislature of this State have in some instances made a compensation to the grantees under New-York, and I am persuaded, were it in their power, would gladly do the same for others, but they are possessed of no more land for that purpose. For these reasons, I presume no others, the Governor and some few gentlemen deeply interested in those lands under Vermont, have expressed themselves somewhat bitterly against the new federal plan of government. Indeed, were we to be admitted unconditionally it would introduce much confusion. Now, sir, permit me to ask whether you do not think it probable that the federal legislature, when formed, might, on our accession, be induced on some terms to make a

compensation to the New-York grantees out of their western land? And whether those grantees might not be induced to accept of such compensation? Let me further suggest whether it might be favorable for Vermont to make some of those amendments, which have been proposed by several States, and which, I think, are generally within the power of the federal legislature, the basis of her admission. Could the difficulties I have mentioned be removed, all interest in opposition could here be reconciled. The idea of procuring justice to be done those whom we had perhaps injured by our too precipitate measures, and of being connected with a Government which promises to be efficient, permanent, and honorable, would, I am persuaded, produce the greatest unanimity on the subject. If you think these matters worthy the attention of the friends of the Confederacy, be good enough to write me by my brother, who will be the bearer of this.

Our Legislature will meet in October, when these matters will be taken up seriously. Several gentlemen of my acquaintance, who are men of influence, and will be members of the Legislature, have requested me to procure all the information in my power on this subject. Any thing you may communicate to me in confidence will be sacredly attended to, of which Mr. Kelly, who writes by the same opportunity, will give you the fullest assurance.

I am, Sir, with sentiments of esteem,

Your most obedient servant,

NATHANIEL CHIPMAN.

Alex. Hamilton, Esq.

HAMILTON TO CHIPMAN.

POUGHKEEPSIE, July 22, 1788.

SIR:

Your brother delivered me your favor, which I received with pleasure, as the basis of a correspondence that may be productive of public good.

The accession of Vermont to the Confederacy is, doubtless, an object of great importance to the whole; and it appears to me that this is the favorable moment for effecting it upon the best terms for all concerned. Besides more general reasons, there are circumstances of the moment which will forward a proper arrangement. One of the first subjects of deliberation with the new Congress will be the independence of Kentucky, for which the Southern States will be anxious. The Northern will be glad to send a counterpoise in Vermont. These mutual interests and inclinations will facilitate a proper result.

I see nothing that can stand in your way but the interfering claims under the grants of New-York. As to taxation, the natural operation of the new system will place you exactly where you might wish to be. The public debt, as far as it can prudently be provided for, will be by the Western lands and the appropriation of some general fund. *There will be no distribution of it to particular parts of the community.* The fund will be sought for in indirect taxation; as for a number of years, and except in time of war, direct taxes would be an impolitic measure. Hence, as you can have no objection to your proportion of contribution as consumers, you can fear nothing from the article of taxation.

I readily conceive that it will hardly be practicable to you to come into the Union unless you are secured from claims under New-York grants. Upon the whole, therefore, I think it will be expedient for you, as early as possible, to ratify the Constitution, "upon condition that Congress shall provide for the extinguishment of all existing claims to land under grants of the State of New-York, which may interfere with claims under the grants of the State of Vermont." You will do well to conform your boundary to that heretofore marked out by Congress, otherwise insuperable difficulties would be likely to arise with this State.

I should think it altogether unadvisable to annex any other conditions to your ratification; for there is scarcely any of the amendments proposed that will not have a party opposed to it, and there are several that will meet with a very strong opposition; and it would, therefore, be highly inexpedient for

you to embarrass your main object by any collateral difficulties.

As I write in Convention, I have it not in my power to enlarge. You will perceive my general ideas on the subject. I will only add, that it will be wise to lay as little impediment as possible in the way of your reception into the Union.

A. HAMILTON.

HAMILTON TO MADISON.

POUGHKEEPSIE, July 22, 1788.

DEAR SIR:

I wrote to you by the last post, since which nothing material has turned up here. We are debating on amendments without having decided what is to be done with them. There is so great a diversity in the views of our opponents that it is impossible to predict any thing. Upon the whole, however, our fears diminish.

Yours affectionately,

A. HAMILTON.

James Madison, jr., New-York.

HAMILTON TO SAMUEL BROOME.

NEW-YORK, Aug. 6, 1788.

DEAR SIR:

I have this moment received your letter of the thirteenth ultimo, and am sorry that the rules of propriety in respect to my situation, as a member of Congress, will not permit my acting in the capacity you wish.

My situation for some time past has prevented my acknowledging one or two of your favors, which have been duly handed to me. I recollect that one of them contains an inquiry concern-

ing your son, to which you will naturally desire an answer. My public avocations, for some time past, have put it out of my power to ascertain the progress he has made; though I expect, when I shall be enough disengaged to examine, to find it a good one. It cannot fail to be so, if his diligence has been equal to his capacity. I shall shortly write you further on the subject.

With great esteem,
I remain, Sir,
Your obedient servant,
A. HAMILTON.

Mr. Samuel Broome.

HAMILTON TO WASHINGTON.

NEW-YORK, August 13, 1788.

SIR:

Captain Cochran of the British navy has requested my aid in recovering a family watch in the possession of ————. In compliance with his request, I have written the letter herewith (to ——— ———), which I take the liberty to convey through you, in hope that if you see no impropriety in it, you would add your influence to the endeavor to gratify Captain Cochran. It is one of those things in which the affections are apt to be interested beyond the value of the object, and in which one naturally feels an inclination to oblige.

I have delivered to Mr. Madison, to be forwarded to you, a set of the papers under the signature of Publius, neatly enough bound to be honored with a place in your library. I presume you have understood that the writers of these papers are chiefly Mr. Madison and myself, with some aid from Mr. Jay.

I take it for granted, sir, you have concluded to comply with what will no doubt be the general call of your country in relation to the new Government. You will permit me to say that it is indispensable you should lend yourself to its first operations.

It is of little purpose to have *introduced* a system, if the weightiest influence is not given to its firm *establishment* in the outset.

I remain with the greatest esteem,

Your obedient and humble servant,

A. HAMILTON.

General Washington.

HAMILTON TO GOVERNOR LIVINGSTON.

NEW-YORK, August 29, 1788.

DEAR SIR:

We are informed here, that there is some probability that your Legislature will instruct your delegates to vote for Philadelphia as the place of the meeting of the first Congress under the new Government. I presume this information can hardly be well founded, as upon my calculations, there is not a State in the Union so much interested in having the temporary residence at New-York, as New Jersey.

As between Philadelphia and New-York, I am mistaken if a greater proportion of your State will not be benefited by having the seat of government at the latter than the former place.

If at the latter, too, its exposed and eccentric position will necessitate the early establishment of a permanent seat, and in passing south, it is highly probable the Government would light upon the Delaware in New Jersey. The Northern States do not wish to increase Pennsylvania, by an accession of all the wealth and population of the Federal City. Pennsylvania, herself, when not seduced by *immediate possession*, will be glad to concur in a situation on the Jersey side of the Delaware. Here are at once a majority of the States; but place the Government once down in Pennsylvania, Pennsylvania will, of course, hold fast; the State of Delaware will do the same.

All the States south, looking forward to the time, when the balance of population will enable them to carry the Government further south (say to the Potomac), and being accommodated in

the mean time as well as they wish, will concur in no change. The Government, from the delay, will take root in Philadelphia, and Jersey will lose all prospect of the Federal City within her limits.

These appear to me calculations so obvious, that I cannot persuade myself New Jersey will so much *oversee* her interest as to fall, in the present instance, into the snares of Pennsylvania.

With the sincerest respect and regard,
I remain, dear Sir,
Your obedient servant,
A. HAMILTON.

CHIPMAN TO HAMILTON.

NEWFANE, Sept. 6, 1788.

SIR:

I have received by Capt. Ville, your favor of the 22d of July. Since I wrote you, I have had an opportunity of conversing with his Excellency, the Governor, and most of the council, on the subject of Vermont's accession to the Confederacy. They generally agree, that the terms suggested are good; that it will be highly the interest of Vermont to accede; and that the present is likely to be a favorable crisis. But it is a question whether we ought to make any propositions to the present Congress, or prepare matters, and wait the new arrangement. Vermont will not make a point of introducing any amendments. We shall not be the first to feel the inconveniences, if any should arise, from the exercise of the new federal powers. For myself, I readily conceive, that direct taxation, under the new system, will be very inconsiderable during the continuance of peace; yet I find an exemption from the expenses of the late war will have with the citizens of this State a very powerful effect in producing unanimity on the subject of a Union.

But I hope this matter will in some way be compromised. If, sir, you have any thing to suggest on this subject, that may pro-

mote the public good, I should be very happy in the communication, previous to the session of Assembly in October next. The choice of representatives, which was on Tuesday last, has, as far as I have heard, succeeded favorably. Mr. Kelly, who is so obliging as to take charge of this letter, will be able to give you a more particular account than can be done in this way, as he has conversed largely with the Governor, Council, and other persons of influence, with whom he has great weight.

I am, Sir,

With much esteem and respect,

Your most obedient servant,

NATHL. CHIPMAN.

A. Hamilton, Esq.

HAMILTON TO WASHINGTON.

NEW-YORK, September, 1788.

DEAR SIR:

Your Excellency's friendly and obliging letter of the 28th ultimo, came safely to hand. I thank you for your assurance of seconding my application to General ———. The truth of that affair is, that he purchased the watch for a trifle of a British soldier, who plundered Major Cochran, at the moment of his fall, at Yorktown.

I should be deeply pained, my dear sir, if your scruples in regard to a certain station, should be matured into a resolution to decline it; though I am neither surprised at their existence, nor can I but agree in opinion, that the caution you observe, in deferring an ultimate determination, is prudent. I have, however, reflected maturely on the subject, and have come to a conclusion (in which I feel no hesitation), that every public and personal consideration will demand from you an acquiescence in what will *certainly* be the unanimous wish of your country. The absolute retreat which you meditated at the close of the late war was natural, and proper. Had the Government pro-

duced by the revolution, gone on in a *tolerable* train, it would have been most advisable to have persisted in that retreat. But I am clearly of opinion, that the crisis which brought you again into public view, left you no alternative but to comply; and I am equally clear in the opinion, that you are by that act *pledged* to take a part in the execution of the Government. I am not less convinced, that the impression of this necessity of your filling the station in question, is so universal, that you run no risk of any uncandid imputation by submitting to it. But even if this were not the case, a regard to your own reputation, as well as to the public good, calls upon you in the strongest manner, to run that risk.

It cannot be considered as a compliment to say, that on your acceptance of the office of President, the success of the new Government, in its commencement, may materially depend. Your agency and influence will be not less important in preserving it from the future attacks of its enemies, than they have been in recommending it in the first instance, to the adoption of the people. Independent of all considerations drawn from this source, the point of light in which you stand at home and abroad, will make an infinite difference in the respectability with which the Government will begin its operations, in the alternative of your being or not being at the head of it. I forbear to urge considerations which might have a more personal application. What I have said will suffice for the inferences I mean to draw.

First. In a matter so essential to the well-being of society, as the prosperity of a newly instituted government, a citizen of so much consequence as yourself to its success, has no option but to lend his services if called for. Permit me to say, it would be inglorious, in such a situation, not to hazard the glory, however great, which he might have previously acquired.

Secondly. Your signature to the proposed system, pledges your judgment for its being such an one as, upon the whole, was worthy of the public approbation. If it should miscarry (as men commonly decide from success, or the want of it), the blame will, in all probability, be laid on the system itself; and

the framers of it will have to encounter the disrepute of having brought about a revolution in government, without substituting any thing that was worthy of the effort. They pulled down one Utopia, it will be said, to build up another. This view of the subject, if I mistake not, my dear sir, will suggest to your mind greater hazard to that fame, which must be and ought to be dear to you, in refusing your future aid to the system, than in affording it. I will only add, that in my estimate of the matter, that aid is indispensable.

I have taken the liberty to express these sentiments, and to lay before you my view of the subject. I doubt not the considerations mentioned, have fully occurred to you, and I trust they will finally produce in your mind the same result which exists in mine. I flatter myself, the frankness with which I have delivered myself will not be displeasing to you. It has been prompted by motives which you would not disapprove.

I remain, my dear Sir,

With the sincerest respect and regard,

Your obedient and humble servant,

A. HAMILTON.

STEUBEN TO HAMILTON.

Le 5 de Sept. 1788.

MONSIEUR,

La lettre c'y joint de Mr. R. Peters, contienne une preuve, non équivoque, que dans mes premières applications et immédiatement après la paix, j'ai appuyé mes prétentions aux E. U. sur une stipulation ou contract fait en entrant dans leur service.

Comme vous étiez de cette même committée à Philadelphie, je m'en rapporte à votre mémoire. Dans tous les committées subséquentes j'ai toujours appuyé sur ce même contract, et je me rapporte à tous les Messieurs qui successivement furent des committées sur ce sujet.

Comme vous êtes de la presente Congrès, je vous prie de communiquer la reporte de Mr. Peters à cette committée.

J'ai l'honneur d'être avec affection,

Monsieur,

Votre très humble,

STEUBEN.

Alexander Hamilton.

HAMILTON TO THEODORE SEDGWICK.

NEW-YORK, Oct. 9, 1788.

"Your last letter but one met me at Albany attending court, whence I am just returned. I am sorry for the schism you hint at among the Federalists, but I have so much confidence in the good management of the fast friends of the Constitution, that I hope no ill consequences will ensue from that disagreement. It will, however, be worthy of great care to avoid suffering a difference of opinion on collateral points, to produce any serious division between those who have hitherto drawn together on the great national question. Permit me to add, that I do not think you should allow any line to be run between those who wish to trust alterations to future experience, and those who are desirous of them at the present juncture. The rage for amendments is, in my opinion, rather to be parried by address than encountered with open force; and I should therefore be loth to learn that your parties had been arrayed professedly upon the distinction I have mentioned.

The mode in which amendments may best be made, and twenty other matters, may come as pretexts for avoiding the evil, and securing the good.

Yours,

A. HAMILTON.

HAMILTON TO CHIPMAN.

1788.

SIR:

Your favor of the 6th of September has been duly handed to me, and I receive great pleasure from the hopes you appear to entertain of a favorable turn of affairs in Vermont in regard to the new Government. It is certainly an object of mutual importance to yourselves, and to the Union, and well deserves the best endeavors of every discerning and good man.

I observe with satisfaction your opinion that Vermont will not make a point of introducing amendments. I mean as a condition of her accession. That ground would be the most hazardous which she could venture upon, as it is very probable that such amendments as might be popular with you would be deemed inadmissible by the friends of the system, who will doubtless be the most influential persons in the national councils; and who would rather submit to the inconvenience of your being out of the Union, till circumstances should alter, than consent to any thing that might impair the energy of the Government. The article of taxation is, above all, the most delicate thing to meddle with; for as *plenary* power in that respect must ever be considered as the vital principle of government, no abridgment or constitutional suspension of that power can ever, upon mature consideration, be countenanced by the intelligent friends of an effective National Government. You must, as I remarked in my former letter, rely upon the natural course of things, which I am satisfied will exempt you in ordinary times from direct taxation, on account of the difficulty of exercising it in so extensive a country, so peculiarly situated, with advantage to the revenue or satisfaction to the people. Though this difficulty will be gradually diminished from various causes, a considerable time must first elapse; and, in the interim, you will have nothing to apprehend on this score.

As far as indirect taxation is concerned, it will be impossible to exempt you from sharing in the burthen, nor can it be desired

by your citizens. I repeat these ideas to impress you the more strongly with my sense of the danger of touching this chord, and of the impolicy of perplexing the main object with any such collateral experiments, while I am glad to perceive that you do not think your people will be tenacious on the point.

It will be useless for you to have any view in your act to the present Congress. They can of course do nothing in the matter. All you will have to do, will be to pass an act of accession to the new Constitution, on the conditions upon which you mean to rely. It will then be for the new Government, when met, to declare whether you can be received on your terms or not.

I am sorry to find that the affair of boundary is likely to create some embarrassment. Men's minds, every where out of your State, are made up upon and reconciled to that which has been delineated by Congress. Any departure from it must beget new discussions, in which all the passions will have their usual scope, and may occasion greater impediments than the real importance of the thing would justify. If, however, the further claims you state cannot be gotten over with you, I would still wish to see the experiment made, though with this clog, because I have it very much at heart that you should become a member of the Confederacy. It is, however, not to be inferred that the same disposition will actuate every body. In this State, the pride of certain individuals has too long triumphed over the public interest; and in several of the Southern States a jealousy of Northern influence will prevent any great zeal for increasing in the national councils the number of Northern votes.

I mention these circumstances (though I dare say they will have occurred to you), to show you the necessity of moderation and caution on your part, and the error of any sanguine calculation upon a disposition to receive you at any rate. A supposition of this nature might lead to fatal mistakes.

In the event of an extension of your boundary beyond the Congressional line, would it be impracticable for you to have commissioners appointed to adjust any differences which might arise? I presume the principal object with you in the extension of your boundary would be to cover some private interests. This might be matter of negotiation.

There is one thing which I think it proper to mention to you, about which I have some doubt; that is, whether a legislative accession would be deemed valid. It is the policy of the system to lay its foundations in the *immediate* consent of the people. You will best judge how far it is safe or practicable to have recourse to a convention. Whatever you do, no time ought to be lost. The present moment is undoubtedly critically favorable. Let it by all means be improved. I remain, with esteem, Sir,

Your obedient and humble servant,

A. HAMILTON.

Nathaniel Chipman, Esq.

WASHINGTON TO HAMILTON.

MOUNT VERNON, October 3, 1788.

DEAR SIR:

In acknowledging the receipt of your candid and friendly letter of —— by the last post, little more is incumbent on me than to thank you sincerely for the frankness with which you communicated your sentiments; and to assure you that the same manly tone of intercourse will always be more than barely welcome. Indeed, it will be highly acceptable to me. I am particularly glad, in the present instance, you have dealt thus freely and like a friend.

Although I could not help observing from several publications and letters, that my name had been sometimes spoken of, and that it was possible the *contingency* which is the subject of your letter might happen; yet I thought it best to maintain a guarded silence and to back the *counsel* of my best friends (which I certainly hold in the highest estimation), rather than to hazard an imputation unfriendly to the delicacy of my feelings. For, situated as I am, I could hardly bring the question into the slightest discussion, or ask an opinion, even in the most confidential manner, without betraying, in my judgment, some impropriety of conduct, or without feeling an apprehension that a

premature display of anxiety might be construed into a vainglorious desire of pushing myself into notice as a candidate. Now, if I am not grossly deceived in myself, I should unfeignedly rejoice in case the Electors, by giving their votes in favor of some other person, would save me from the disagreeable dilemma of being forced to accept or refuse. If that may not be, I am in the next place earnestly desirous of searching out the truth, and of knowing whether there does not exist a probability that the Government would be just as happily and effectually carried into execution without my aid as with it. I am *truly* solicitous to obtain all the previous information, which the circumstances will afford, and to determine (when the determination can with propriety be no longer postponed) according to the principles of right reason and the dictates of a clear conscience, without too great a reference to the unforeseen consequences which may affect my person or reputation. Until that period, I may fairly hold myself open to conviction, though I allow your sentiments to have weight in them; and I shall not pass by your arguments without giving them as dispassionate a consideration as I can possibly bestow on them.

In taking a survey of the subject in whatever point of light I have been able to place it, I will not suppress the acknowledgment, my dear sir, that I have always felt a kind of gloom upon my mind as often as I have been taught to expect I might, and perhaps must, ere long be called to make a decision. You will, I am well assured, believe the assertion (though I have little expectation it would gain credit from those who are less acquainted with me), that if I should receive and act under the appointment, the acceptance would be attended with more diffidence and reluctance than ever I experienced before in my life. It would be, however, with a fixed and sole determination of lending whatever assistance might be in my power to promote the public weal, in hopes that, at a convenient and an early period, my services might be dispensed with, and that I might be permitted once more to retire, to pass an unclouded evening after the stormy day of life, in the bosom of domestic tranquillity.

But why these anticipations? If the friends of the Constitution conceive that my administering the Government will be the means of its acceleration and strength, is it not probable that the adversaries thereof may entertain the same ideas, and of course make it an object of opposition? That many of this description will be amongst the Electors, I have no more doubt than I have of the part they will act at the election, which will be adverse to the choice of any character who, from whatever cause, would be likely to thwart their views. It might be impolitic perhaps in them to make this declaration *previous* to the election, but I shall be out in my conjectures if they do not act conformably thereto at it, and prove that all the *seeming* moderation by which their present conduct is marked, is calculated to lull and deceive. Their plan of opposition is systematized, and a regular intercourse between the leaders of it in the several States (I have much reason to believe) is formed to render it more effectual.

With sentiments of sincere regard and esteem,

I am, dear Sir,

Your most obedient humble servant,

GEORGE WASHINGTON.

The Hon. Alexander Hamilton.

HAMILTON TO THEODORE SEDGEWICK.

NEW-YORK, October 9, 1788.

I thank you, my dear sir, for your obliging congratulations on the event towards effecting which your aid as a joint laborer was so essential. I hope experience may show that, while it promotes the interest of this place, it will not be incompatible with public good. We are making efforts to prepare handsome accommodations for the session of the new Congress.

On the subject of Vice-President, my ideas have concurred with yours, and I believe Mr. Adams will have the votes of this State. He will certainly, I think, be preferred to the other

gentleman. Yet *certainly* is perhaps too strong a word. I can conceive that the other, who is supposed to be a more pliable man, may command anti-federal influence.

The only hesitation in my mind with regard to Mr. Adams has arisen within a day or two, from a suggestion by a particular gentleman that he is unfriendly in his sentiments to General Washington. Richard H. Lee, who will probably, as rumor now runs, come from Virginia, is also in this style. The Lees and Adams's have been in the habit of uniting, and hence may spring up a cabal very embarrassing to the Executive, and of course to the administration of the government. Consider this, —sound the reality of it, and let me hear from you.

What think you of Lincoln or Knox? This is a flying thought.

Yours, with sincere regard,

A. HAMILTON.

Mr. Sedgewick.

SEDGEWICK TO HAMILTON.

STOCKBRIDGE, Oct. 16, 1788.

MY DEAR SIR:

Your favor of the 9th I have this moment received, and detain the post a while that I may make a very few observations on a subject I conceive highly interesting to the efficient operations of the future Government.

Mr. Adams was formerly infinitely more democratical than at present, and possessing that jealousy which always accompanied such a character, he was averse to repose such unlimited confidence in the Commander-in-chief as then was the disposition of Congress.

Mr. Adams is not among the number of my particular friends, but, as a man of unconquerable intrepidity, and of incorruptible integrity, as greatly experienced in the interests and character of this country, he possesses my highest esteem.

His writings show that he deserves the confidence of those

who wish energy in government, for although those writings are too tedious and unpleasant in perusal, yet they are evidently the result of deep reflection, and as they encounter popular prejudices are an evidence of an erect and independent spirit.

Lincoln and Knox I love, their characters, too, I respect, but it is now too late to push in this State the interests of either. The minds of all men here seem to be fixed either on Adams or Hancock.

Our Legislature meet on the 29th. From Boston I will early write you on the subject, and am with sincere respect,

Yours, affectionately,

THEODORE SEDGEWICK.

Hon. Mr. Hamilton.

SEDGEWICK TO HAMILTON.

BOSTON, Nov. 2, 1788.

MY DEAR SIR:

In my last hasty letter I engaged to write to you soon after my arrival in this town. Various questions will be agitated in the Legislature (of considerable magnitude) which respect the organization of the government.

There is a party of Federalists who are of opinion, that the Electors should be chosen by the people, and the Representatives not in districts, but at large. These will be joined by all the antis probably. I yet hope they will not succeed. We yesterday committed to a committee of both Houses the circular letter from your Convention. The event is uncertain, but a considerable number of Federalists have been brought over to the amendment system. The prospect is, notwithstanding, that the real friends of the Constitution will prevail. Every thing depends upon it, and the exertion will be proportionate to the magnitude of the object.

Should the Electors be chosen by the Legislature, Mr. Adams will probably combine all the votes of Massachusetts. I am very

certain, that the suggestion that he is unfriendly to General Washington, is entirely unfounded. Mr. Hancock has been very explicit in patronizing the doctrine of Amendment. The other gentleman is for postponing the conduct of that business until it shall be understood from experience. * * * *

I am, dear Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

THEODORE SEDGEWICK.

The Hon. Mr. Hamilton.

COL. OLNEY TO HAMILTON.

PROVIDENCE, 3d Nov., 1788.

DEAR SIR:

Your favor of 6th ulto., was duly received. I thought proper to postpone replying to it till after the session of the General Assembly should be over, which terminated on Saturday night last, in order that I might have it in my power to give you, with more certainty, the proceedings of the Legislature, on the subject of the New Constitution. The minority, both in of the House, took unwearied pains during the session, to procure a Convention in the legal mode pointed out for considering the New Constitution; but, sir, it proved, as heretofore, an unsuccessful attempt; for Mr. Hazard, who is an implacable and powerful enemy to the new system, and the leading character in all the vile politics carrying on in this *devoted* State, had so well prepared the majority, that when the question was put, whether this State should appoint a Convention or not, the question was lost nearly three to one; fifteen in favor of the motion and forty-four against it. After which (late on Saturday night) Mr. Hazard moved that a vote be passed, for printing copies of the circular letter from the Convention of New-York, to be distributed throughout this State, and submitting to the people at large, the propriety of appointing delegates to meet a *proposed* Convention, for considering amendments, agreeably to the re-

commendations of said circular letter. The vote being put, after much debate, it was carried in favor of the measure by three to one, notwithstanding every exertion of the minority, to prevent the adoption of so novel and unprecedented a proceeding. It was urged, and with truth, that should a Convention finally meet for the purpose of amending the Constitution, that it would be composed entirely of the adopting States; and, as such, this State could not, upon any principles of right, expect to be admitted to a seat in that Honorable Body, as we so obstinately (and with our eyes open) have refused, and still neglect to accede to the new system. But, sir, reason and argument will avail nothing with those wicked and designing opposers to a just and honorable Federal Government. The Assembly have made an adjournment to the last Monday in December next, in an expectation to hear the report from the respective towns. Mr. Hazard, and a Col. John Gardener (who is entirely under the influence of Mr. Hazard's politics), are ordered by the Assembly to go on from this State, and take their seats in Congress, as soon as they can leave home; so that in a short time you will have those two antis to deal with.

I am, with sincere esteem,
Sir,
Your obedient humble serv't,
JEREMIAH OLNEY.

Col. Alexander Hamilton.

WASHINGTON TO HAMILTON.

MOUNT VERNON, Nov. 6, 1788.

DEAR SIR:

The Count de Moustier affording a very favorable conveyance for Capt. Cochran's watch, I have requested the favor of him to take charge of it; and he will deliver it to you, accord

ingly, with Mrs. Washington's and my best wishes for you and Mrs. Hamilton.

I am, dear Sir,

Your obedient and affectionate serv't,

G. WASHINGTON.

The Hon. Alexander Hamilton.

HAMILTON TO SEDGEWICK.

NEW-YORK, Nov. 9, 1788.

Your last letter but one met me at Albany, attending court, from whence I am but just returned. Yours of the 2d instant is this moment handed me.

I am very sorry for the schism you hint at among the Federalists, but I have so much confidence in the good management of the fast friends of the Constitution, that I hope no ill consequences will ensue from that disagreement. It will, however, be worthy of great care to avoid suffering a difference of opinion on collateral points, to produce any serious division between those who have hitherto drawn together on the great national question.

Permit me to add, that I do not think you should allow any line to be run between those who wish to trust alterations to future experience, and those who are desirous of them at the present juncture. The rage for amendments is, in my *opinion*, rather to be parried by address than encountered with open force. And I shall, therefore, be loth to learn that your parties have been arranged professedly upon the distinction I have mentioned. The *mode* in which amendments may best be made, and twenty other matters, may serve as pretexts for avoiding the evil and securing the good.

On the question between Mr. H. and Mr. A., Mr. King will probably have informed you that I have, upon the whole, con-

cluded that the latter ought to be supported. My measures will be taken accordingly. I had but one scruple, but after mature consideration I have relinquished it. Mr. Adams, to a sound understanding, has always appeared to me to add an ardent love for the public good; and as his further knowledge of the world seems to have corrected those jealousies which he is represented to have been once influenced by, I trust nothing of the kind suggested in my former letter will disturb the harmony of administration. Let me continue to hear from you, and believe me to be, with very great esteem and regard,

Your friend and servant,

A. HAMILTON.

T. Sedgewick, Esq.

HAMILTON TO WASHINGTON.

November 18, 1788.

DEAR SIR:

Your last two letters have duly come to hand, and the Count de Moustier has delivered me the watch you committed to his charge. Your obliging attention to this matter claims my particular acknowledgments. I will make no apology for asking you to take the additional trouble of forwarding the inclosed to the General. I take the liberty of passing it through you, that you may, by perusing the contents, know the situation of the business.

The demand of fifty guineas is to me quite unexpected. I am sorry to add, that there is too good evidence that it cost a mere trifle to the General. This, however, I mention in confidence. Nor shall I give you any further trouble on the subject. Whatever may be proper will be done.

Mrs. Hamilton requests her affectionate remembrances to Mrs. Washington, and joins me in the best wishes for you both.

I remain, dear Sir,

Your affectionate humble serv't,

A. HAMILTON.

P. S. Your last letter, on a certain subject, I have received. I feel a conviction that you will finally see your acceptance to be indispensable. It is no compliment to say, that no other man can sufficiently unite the public opinion, or can give the requisite weight to the office, in the commencement of the Government. These considerations appear to me of themselves decisive. I am not sure that your refusal would not throw every thing into confusion. I am sure that it would have the worst effect imaginable. Indeed, as I hinted in a former letter, I think circumstances leave no option.

HAMILTON TO MADISON.

NEW-YORK, Nov. 23 1788.

I thank you, my dear sir, for yours of the 20th. The only part of it which surprises me, is what you mention respecting Clinton. I cannot, however, believe that the plan will succeed. Nor, indeed, do I think, that Clinton would be disposed to exchange his present appointment for that office, or risk his popularity by holding both. At the same time, the attempt merits attention, and ought not to be neglected as chimerical or impracticable.

In Massachusetts the Electors will, I understand, be appointed by the Legislature, and will be all Federal, and 'tis probable will be, for the most part, in favor of Adams. It is said, the same thing will happen in New Hampshire, and I have reason to believe, will be the case in Connecticut. In this State it is difficult to form any certain calculation. A large majority of the *Assembly* was doubtless of an Anti-federal complexion, but the schism in the party which has been occasioned by the falling off of some of its leaders in the Convention, leaves me not without hope, that if matters are well managed, we may procure a majority for some pretty equal compromise. In the Senate we have the superiority by one. In New Jersey there seems to be no question, but that the complexion of the electors will be

Federal; and I suppose, if thought expedient, they may be united in favor of Adams. Pennsylvania you can best judge of. From Delaware, Maryland, and South Carolina, I presume, we may count with tolerable assurance on Federal men; and I should imagine, if pains are taken, the danger of an Anti-federal Vice-President might itself be rendered the instrument of Union. At any rate, their weight will not be thrown into the scale of Clinton, and I do not see from what quarter numbers can be marshalled in his favor, equal to those who will advocate Adams, supposing even a division in the Federal votes.

On the whole, I have concluded to support Adams, though I am not without apprehensions on the score we have conversed about. My principal reasons are these: First—He is a declared partisan of deferring to future experience the expediency of amendments in the system, and (although I do not altogether *adcpt* this sentiment) it is much nearer my own than certain other doctrines. Secondly—He is certainly a character of importance in the Eastern States; if he is not Vice-President, one of two worse things will be likely to happen. Either he must be nominated to some important office, for which he is less proper, or will become a malcontent, and give additional weight to the opposition to the Government. As to Knox, I cannot persuade myself that he will incline to the appointment. He must *sacrifice* emolument by it, which must be of *necessity* a primary object with him.

If it should be thought expedient to endeavor to unite in a particular character, there is a danger of a different kind to which we must not be inattentive—the possibility of rendering it doubtful who is appointed President. You know the Constitution has not provided the means of distinguishing in certain cases, and it would be disagreeable even to have a man treading close upon the heels of the person we wish as President. May not the malignity of the opposition be, in some instances, exhibited even against him? Of all this we shall best judge, when we know who are our Electors; and we must, in our different circles, take our measures accordingly.

I could console myself for what you mention respecting your-

self, from a desire to see you in one of the executive departments, did I not perceive the representation will be defective in characters of a certain description. Wilson is evidently out of the question. King tells me he does not believe he will be elected into either House. Mr. Gouverneur Morris set out to-day for France, by way of Philadelphia. If you are not in one of the branches, the Government may sincerely feel the want of men who unite to zeal all the requisite qualifications for parrying the machinations of its enemies. Might I advise, it would be, that you bent your course to Virginia.

Affectionately yours,

A. HAMILTON.

Mr. J. Madison.

WASHINGTON TO HAMILTON.

Monday morning, January 4, 1789.

DEAR SIR:

I feel myself very much obliged by what you sent me yesterday. The letter from Governor Johnston I return, much pleased to find so authentic an account of the adoption by North Carolina of the Constitution.

Yours, sincerely and affectionately,

G. WASHINGTON.

HAMILTON TO SEDGEWICK.

NEW-YORK, Jan. 29, 1789.

MY DEAR SIR:

I thank you for your two letters of the 4th and 7th instant, which arrived here during my absence at Albany, from which place I have but recently returned. I believe you may be perfectly tranquil on the subject of Mr. Adams's election. It seems to be certain that all the Middle States will vote for him to Dela-

ware inclusively, and probably Maryland. In the South, there are no candidates thought of but Rutledge and Clinton. The latter will have the votes of Virginia, and it is *possible* some in South Carolina. Maryland will certainly not vote for Clinton, and New-York, from our Legislature having by their contentions let slip the day, will not vote at all. For the last circumstance, I am not sorry, as the most we could hope would be to balance accounts and do no harm. The Anti-federalists incline to an appointment notwithstanding, but I discourage it with the Federalists. Under these circumstances, I see not how any person can come near Mr. Adams; that is, taking it for granted that he will unite the votes in New Hampshire and Massachusetts. I expect that the Federal votes in Virginia, if any, will be in favor of Adams.

You will probably have heard that our Legislature has passed a bill for electing Representatives. The houses continue to disagree about Senators, and I fear a compromise will be impracticable. I do not, however, entirely lose hope. In this situation, you will perceive that we have much to apprehend respecting the seat of Government. The Pennsylvanians are endeavoring to bring their forces early in the field. I hope our friends in the North will not be behindhand. On many accounts, indeed, it appears to be important that there be an appearance of zeal and punctuality in coming forward to set the Government in motion.

I shall learn with infinite pleasure that you are a Representative. As to me, this will not be the case—I believe, from my own disinclination to the thing. We shall, however, I flatter myself, have a couple of Federalists.

I remain your affectionate and obedient,

A. HAMILTON.

WADSWORTH TO HAMILTON.

HARTFORD, February, 1789.

MY DEAR SIR:

Your favor of the 25th January came in good time. Our votes were given agreeably to your wishes—Washington, 7; Adams, 5; Governor Huntington, 2. By letters from Carrington, I learn that Clinton is the Anti-federal Vice-president; but I think we have nothing to fear. I believe New Hampshire will give Adams 4; Massachusetts, 6; Georgia, 6—as letters from Georgia say he will have at least so many—which, with ours, makes 21, which is more than Clinton can get, and we may certainly reckon on three more for Adams in South Carolina, Maryland, Delaware, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey. We waived an answer to your State, and to Virginia. As you did not get my letter in season to answer me on that subject, I feared we should not do any good by an answer; and as the Anti-federalists did not move it, I thought we had best let it sleep. * * *

I am, dear sir,

Your affectionate friend,

JEREMIAH WADSWORTH.

END OF VOL. I.

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